



The Supposed Fall of AP Human

Exploring the recent shift from AP Human to AP World classes, and looking to the future

by Nathan DeSouza

Web Editor-in-Chief

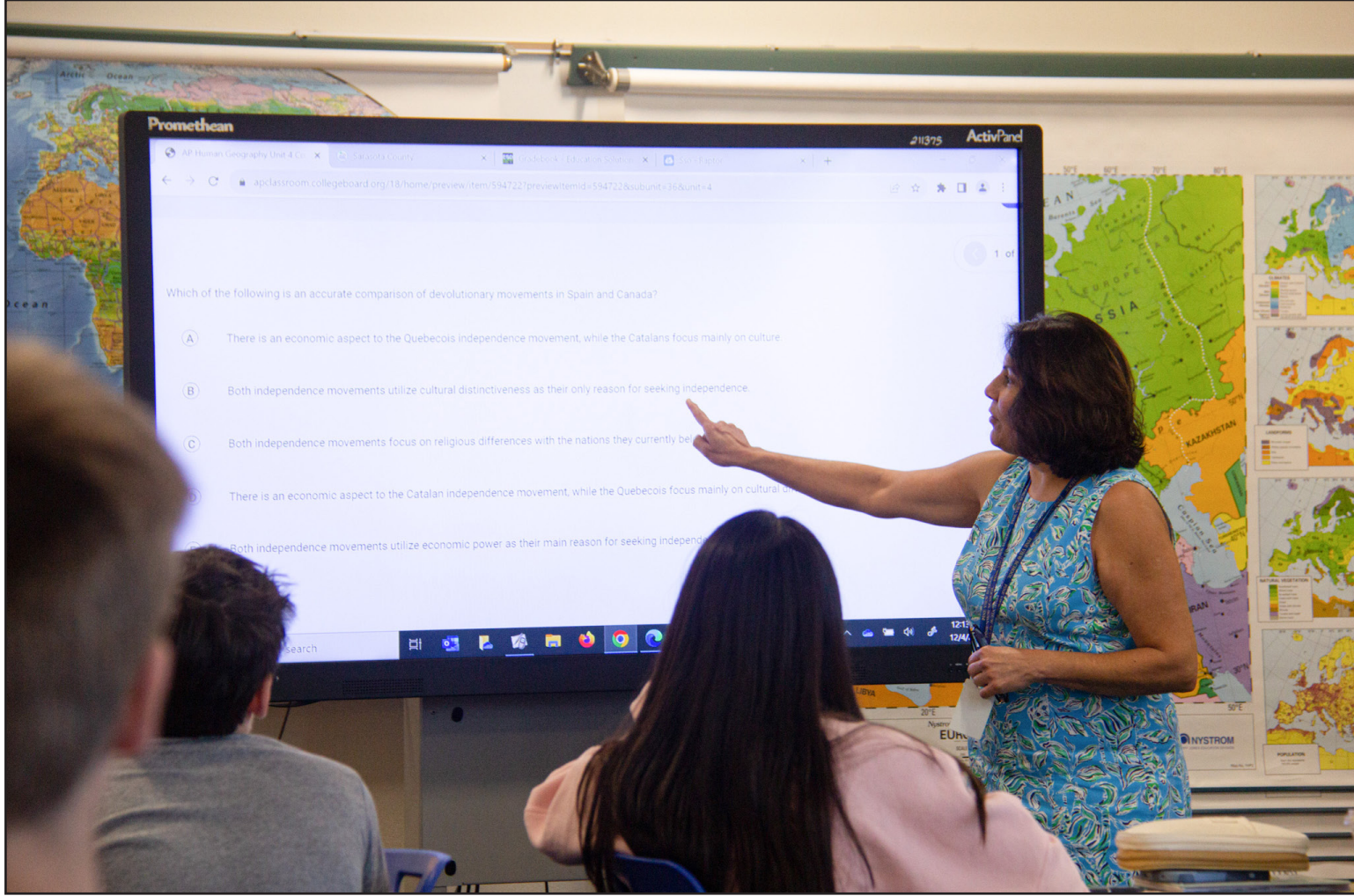
In the ever-evolving landscape of high school education, Advanced Placement (AP) course offerings play a vital role in shaping students' academic journeys. This year, there has been a noticeable shift in scheduling, particularly concerning periods offered for AP Human Geography and AP World History: Modern. While eleventh- and twelfth- graders may have turned a blind eye to this change, it certainly has not been ignored by ninth- and tenth-graders who took AP Human Geography their freshman year.

Last school year, there were five AP Human Geography and five AP World History periods. This year, there are only two periods offered for AP Human Geography and eight periods offered for AP World History.

Such a drastic change in the periods offered sparked discussion in Pine View and begs the question: What exactly happened? The answer to that question might not be as complicated as one would imagine.

Previously, it was customary that World History Honors was taught as a ninth-grade course. Those who had fared well in ninth-grade World History would then move on to AP World History in tenth grade, while others would move into AP Human Geography. However, there has been a push more recently to introduce AP courses earlier in a student's high school education, and having ninth graders take that honors World History course during their freshmen year proved to be a problem in reaching that goal.

So, to combat that conflict, action had to be taken. The result was both AP Human Geography and AP World History being available to freshmen.



AP Human Geography teacher Roma Jagdish points to a multiple-choice question on the board about devolutionary movements around the world. Jagdish believes that AP Human Geography offers a unique education on many topics students don't learn about in their other classes. PHOTO BY NATHAN DESOUZA

"[Traditionally taking World History Honors in ninth grade] prevents you from getting into an AP course at that earlier point in time. So, what happened is that AP World History, which used to be a tenth-grade course, has now moved back into ninth grade," college resource counselor Lance Bergman said.

The Class of 2026 was the first year to officially have the option of taking AP World History in ninth grade, a decision that has been put in place after around ten years of discussion amongst the Social Studies department.

So how does this correlate back to the big question?

The reasoning behind the disproportionate scheduling for AP Human Geography and AP World History

in comparison to last year is rooted in the ninth- and tenth-graders themselves.

Because a large number of ninth-graders took AP Human Geography last year, they ultimately contributed to the number of AP World History classes offered this year. The majority of eighth-graders (now ninth-graders) saw taking AP World History as an opportunity to get a credit done earlier, and enrolled in the class, further contributing to the number of periods we see today.

On the other hand, we could see these numbers even out over the next few years.

College and Career Advisor Lori Wiley clears this up by stating, "...we have still as many tenth-graders [contributing to the number of periods offered for AP World

History] because they're still on the first trajectory, where they would have started with Human, so it does stand to reason that next year, we might not have eight sections of AP World History and will start to even out as we move forward because then it will become one of those courses that ninth graders will be permitted to take, but not required."

However, this does not impact the value of AP Human Geography to students. It is likely the only geography course that students will be taught since the state replaced seventh-grade geography with Civics.

"I think [AP Human Geography] is also something that the kids can see the relevance to the world right away. Because it's so current,

I think that helps them make connections," AP Human Geography teacher Roma Jagdish said.

On top of offering useful knowledge that can't be obtained anywhere else, AP Human Geography proves to be a great introduction to AP courses. The class pairs well with certain topics in other core classes that ninth-graders learn about.

In summary, Jagdish expressed the importance of choices, and students choosing the class that would be best for them when they're taking it.

"AP World...I know that there is it's a lot more work, it's more rigorous," she said. "They can make an informed choice that they're ready for that kind of a history class... just having choices is good."

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A Letter for the Class of 2024
Words of advice from a senior to seniors about reaching your potential

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Israeli-Palestinian War: Complexity and Impact

by Ava Lenerz
Match Asst. Editor-in-Chief

Waking up on October 7, 2023, and hearing the news of what had occurred in Israel horrified many. People all over the world had different reactions, but for Israeli teen, Maja, who is taking a gap year in the U.S., this hit home. When she awoke that morning, she checked her phone to see many worried texts from friends checking in on her. Panicked, she immediately called her mom, who, with the rest of Maja's family and friends, was still in Israel. That is when Maja found out about the atrocities that had occurred that day.

"First of all, I felt very scared for my family, for my brother [whom is in the army], for my friends; my best friend is in the army. Also, I was just homesick. I wish I could be there with my family to support them because I know as much as I worried for my brother, my mom worries more for her child," said Maja, who requested to be referred to only by her first name.

Millions of people like Maja and her family are and will continue to be affected by this conflict. Up until now, tens of thousands of deaths have occurred — including civilian deaths. Social studies teacher John Schweig believes that people have attempted to wrongly justify these deaths by not viewing Palestinians and Israelis as human.

"It always precedes a massacre. And I would want people to have their antennae up even during times of peace, listening for such dehumanization...If a person mourns for the October 7 dead, or if they mourn for thousands killed in Gaza, but they don't mourn for both, how is that a reflection of humanity?" Schweig said.

A common theme among people is the preservation of life, which begins by recognizing that most people in these areas are innocent people living their lives.

"We live between the river and the sea and there are families there, we're just normal people, we volunteer, we go to high school...we have our younger brothers, older brothers...the people who are

in the IDF [Israeli Defense Force] right now, yes they're soldiers, but they're also children, like they have parents and they have families at home," Maja said. "And so I feel like I would like people to just be aware of what they say out loud and what they spread out into the world because there are people who are standing behind those slogans, there are people who would be impacted if what you wished for would happen, so just be careful what you wish for."

As families have been torn apart, massacred, and displaced on both sides of the border, it may seem like all hope is lost, but many still believe there is a path to peace. Schweig said that he believes peace is inevitable, but that both sides have not yet "reached the point where they are so disgusted by carnage" that they strive for peace and elect new leadership.

Professor in the School of Interdisciplinary Global Studies and campus Dean of the

"I would want everyone to have their antennae up even during times of peace, listening for such dehumanization."
John Schweig,
social studies teacher

College of Arts and Sciences at USF in St. Petersburg, Thomas Smith, agrees.

"I think that for Palestinians, they're going to say, enough is enough...And I think, a huge backlash against any sort of remaining remnants of Hamas...and so that Palestinians will now say, we need a more kind of moderate, political movement rather than military and sort of terror movements. And I think people can get behind that," he said.

The common ground that



A wall reading "peace" stands next to the Israel-Gaza border. Many people, like Ava Lenerz and her group on a trip to Israel, come to put stones on the wall signifying peace between the two regions. PHOTO PROVIDED BY AVA LENERZ

people have united over is a want for peace and safety, but Maja explained that she believes that cannot be achieved with a terrorist group like Hamas that only wants the destruction of Israel.

"I wish there was peace. I wish the people of Gaza would have a government that cares for them, who turns Gaza into a prosperous place where they can live peacefully. Israel has had peace with multiple countries, with multiple of our neighbors. But you cannot have peace with an organization like Hamas. If you turn to their ideology, their ideas, you can't have peace with someone like that. There is no reasonable side to negotiate with," she said.

The events in Israel and Gaza that began on October 7 are just the latest in a very long and complicated history. If you ask the Palestinians, who have lived there for centuries, they feel that they have a right to the land. Meanwhile, if you ask an Israeli, they'll tell you it's their Jewish homeland — thus, they feel they have a right to the land.

"And so that's kind of where we're stuck. There's sort of two people in one land," Smith said.

Neither the Palestinians nor Israelis are going anywhere, so a solution must be found that accommodates both. Smith said that he feels a two-state solution is still the best way to go.

When it comes to the complex history, Sarasota County School Board member Thomas Edwards believes that "It's just so complex that it requires a real group of critical thinkers with good diplomacy skills to navigate our way out of this."

News about the horrors of this conflict has spread rapidly via social media, but this can and has perpetuated the spread of misinformation.

"I feel like people, especially our age, who are really

exposed to social media feel like they need to take a stand and kind of stand with one of the sides without really knowing what's going on," Maja said, "and so it leads to a situation where there is a lot of hate spreading and a lot of loud people who don't really know what they're talking about."

Although this hate has spread everywhere, the School Board has not heard of anything new in the county as of now.

"We have not had a specific conversation about anti-Semitism or Islamophobia, but I'm confident that all forms of hate are just not tolerated...and bullying of any kind, we have a zero-tolerance rule against that," Edwards said.

He hopes "that students will do the necessary reading and research of this very complex issue, and my additional hope is that we've done a good job with all of you about critical thinking and good life skills..."

Nobody should be going through what the innocent Palestinians and Israelis are experiencing. The Torch would have liked to show the point of view of both Israelis and Palestinians, but due to the sensitivity of the matter, many people and groups declined an interview.

"Both sides are so focused on the legitimate suffering of their own people that they seldom express horror at the other side's death and suffering, leading both sides to complain they are dehumanized by the other," Schweig said. "Thus, people are afraid to speak about the issue for fear they, too, will be called anti-Semitic or anti-Palestinian."

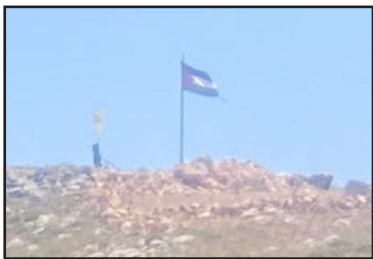
But this is not an all-or-nothing situation — the repercussions of October 7 and the following months will stay with the civilians on both sides for the rest of their lives.

"I know some people who were killed on October 7, I know people who have family and friends who were

kidnapped into Gaza, I know people who are traumatized, I know people who have had their city's bombed in a way that caused much more damage than my city suffered, so it is very easy to be impacted. You either know someone, or you know someone who knows someone, it never goes further than this," Maja said, referring to how the small size of Israel creates a very close community.

She also explained how this war has impacted all aspects of Israeli and Palestinian life with previously unimaginable experiences.

"My brothers are [now] only able to go to school a few days a week, a few kids at once because they won't fit into the bomb shelters," Maja said.



A Palestinian flag flies in the distance across the Israeli border with Lebanon. PHOTO PROVIDED BY AVA LENERZ

"It's something 14-year-olds shouldn't be worrying about: can they fit in a bomb shelter quick enough? They should be busy with tests and math and English, which we study, the history and all that. They shouldn't be worried about their families. They shouldn't be worried about running away from rockets. They shouldn't be worried about all that stuff."

The reality of the situation is horrifying. None of the innocent Israeli citizens and citizens of Gaza deserve this. That is why it is vital to know and verify all the facts so no more misinformation and hate is spread. The Gazans and Israelis have been failed by humanity — help prevent it from happening again.

In the distance, the border wall between Israel and Gaza stands. These two regions have experienced a long and complicated history and conflict. PHOTO PROVIDED BY AVA LENERZ



In Brief:

Hiring Freeze in the School District

by **Isabella Kulawik**
Editor-in-Chief

Amidst lower student enrollment in Sarasota County Schools, the district instated a temporary hiring freeze which began October 13, 2023. This decline in student enrollment is a result of many factors, such as “shifting demographics, population changes, student moving out of county and the passing of House Bill 1 (School Choice and Parental Empowerment Legislation),” according to ABC 7 News.

House Bill 1 is legislation that allows for private schools to be more accessible to students. Therefore, this legislation has contributed to a decrease in enrollment for public schools in the county.

Overall, the hiring freeze has not disrupted activity around the school district; there are still key positions being hired such as custodians, bus

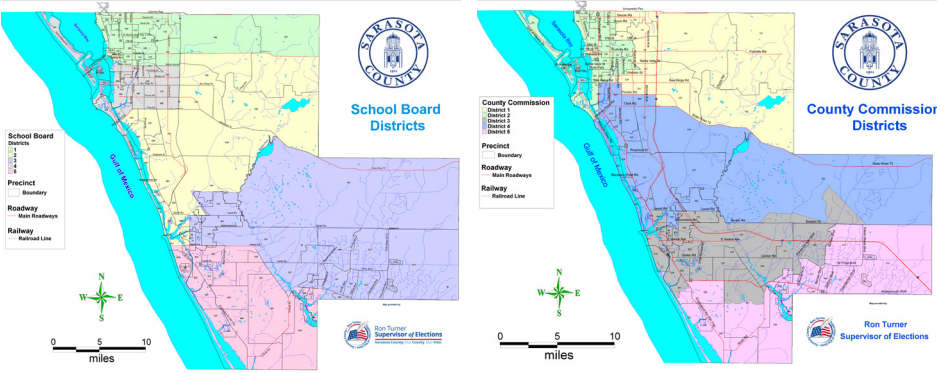
drivers, and ESE specialists.

Staffing Administrator Danielle Schwied oversees hiring and recruitment processes at the district along with application processes and certification. She explained over email that principals are able to request approval for vacancies to be filled and detailed criteria that will be considered for the approval to be granted.

“Factors such as student enrollment, subject matter, and class size will be considered, among other things,” she wrote.

As the hiring freeze continues, the district has also approved a \$40,000 redistricting of Sarasota County Schools. Redistricting is the act of reconfiguring electoral lines — in this case, the lines of the school district. The new map will not affect students and would align the the school district with that of the County Commission.

Redistricting



Left: The current school board district map.
Right: The current County Commission district map. It was voted on 3-2 at the October 17 School Board meeting to approve the new School Board map that will follow the County Commission map. MAPS FROM THE SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS' OFFICE

Fake News: The Threat

by **Madelyn Bailey**
Assistant Opinion Editor

With the recent rise of social media, misinformation in our country and around the world has spread faster than ever. Now more than ever, we see how fake news can have even deadly consequences, as over 800 people died in the early months of 2020 due to misinformation related to COVID-19, according to the American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene.

With how simple it is to create fake news sites, this data is not shocking. According to social studies teacher John Sch-

weig, it is not difficult to create news that people believe.

“In the last 10 years, anyone who can make up a title for a news publication and make their page look official can print stories that people believe,” Schweig said.

It is vital to verify information and sources before believing what is said. Social studies teacher Caroline Gannon said that it is important to recognize the dangers of the internet.

“You need to make sure that any information that you’re getting can be sourced and you need to check the source for bias,” Gannon said.

Along with the rise of fake news sites, there has also been a rise in AI-generated photos and videos. Schweig said that in the upcoming 2024 presidential elections, deep fakes of candidates will be prevalent and could change the outcome of the election.

“We need to be ready for that as a country, or we’re going to be manipulated in a serious way,” he said.

There is proof

KEEPING WITH THE TIMES

Our class presidents on the 2023-2024 school year so far

FRESHMAN:
OMY PATEL

“My goals are to raise at least \$10,000 and make sure fundraising won’t be boring.”



SOPHOMORE:
JOSEPH CALLEJA

“I want to make sure the job is being done correctly... and to continue running great fundraisers that keep the class united.”



JUNIOR:
TERRY SHEN

“I ran for president because I want to expand the activities here at Pine View. [So far] we have done movie nights, astronomy nights, and sporting events.”



SENIOR:
SHANNON HICKEY

“I want to promote connections with the elementary kids. I [also] noticed the lack of spirit... and unresolved social divisions. I don’t mind being the first to break the ice.”



GRAPHIC BY MELISSA WHITE, PHOTOS PROVIDED BY PRESIDENTS



that sometimes fake news can be more interesting and believable than real news. According to a study by MIT, “false news stories are 70 percent more likely to be retweeted than true stories are.”

Although these statistics can be alarming, it is possible to take steps to avoid misinformation. Schweig has a file titled “fake news” which is filled with false political news stories that he shows to his students.

“I try to show them extreme examples of fake news stories so that they can see how ordinary the stories can look,” he said.

Additionally, it is important to

use trustworthy news sources. Schweig recommends the New York Times and PolitiFact as reliable news outlets.

“PolitiFact takes rumors and studies them to see if what they say is true,” he said.

Although the spread of misinformation may be alarming, if the right precautions are taken, fake news can be successfully avoided.

“Don’t believe everything you read, don’t believe everything you hear, and don’t believe everything you see,” Gannon said.



GRAPHICS BY MADELYN BAILEY

Adjusting to life with a pacemaker

by Lindsay Luberecki
News Editor

It was a normal evening on October 18, 2023 for science teacher David Yotsuda, until he passed out on the bathroom floor.

Yotsuda experienced a health scare that night that put him out of teaching for two and a half weeks, but he has since returned to school and has begun adjusting to life with a change — a pacemaker.

That night, Yotsuda experienced a complete heart block, causing him to flatline, meaning his heart stopped beating entirely.

“I was feeling tired, so I was preparing to go to bed early...I kind of felt a little lightheaded and my chest was starting to feel a little tight,” Yotsuda said. “I was going to ask my roommate to call 911...But before I could do that, I blacked out.”

His roommate found Yotsuda on the floor and called the paramedics, who arrived within three minutes and connected him to an electrocardiogram (EKG) machine to track his heartbeat. This was when they discovered the flatline. They prepared to bring him to the ambulance to use the defibrillator (AED) to shock his heart to try to restart it.

“When [they started to take me to the ambulance] my heart decided to start functioning again,” he said. “They didn’t have to use the AED...they got me to the hospital and they had me hooked up to all kinds of stuff. They did an X-ray, did an echocardiogram,

took some blood samples, ran all the tests...which came back all fine.”

His heart did not stop again, but the hospital had him remain there overnight. The next day, he said, a doctor began talking to him about the possibility of inserting a pacemaker.

A pacemaker is a small device that is inserted into the chest and has two leads coming from a small box. These leads connect to the chambers of the heart — in Yotsuda’s case, they connect to the atrium and ventricle. The machine sends electrical signals to the heart to keep it beating. So, if Yotsuda’s heart were to stop beating again, the pacemaker would send a current to restart it.

He consented to the operation, and surgeons inserted the pacemaker.

“The next day I was released to go home but because of the pacemaker and the incision I really had to take time off to kind of rest, recuperate, and also learn things that I can and cannot do with the pacemaker,” he said.

Living life with a pacemaker is certainly an adjustment to make. Attendance Secretary Gina Verdino’s son received a pacemaker at the age of ten, and a second one a few years later, after being diagnosed with cardiomyopathy.

“His heart stopped for six seconds,” she said. “They flew him to All Children’s where the journey started with the pacemaker...his heart was not strong enough to [function] on its own.”

She detailed some of the important restrictions people with pacemakers must remember throughout their day-to-day lives.

“One of the most important things is he has to be very careful not to go near strong magnetic things...metal detectors, he can’t get any MRIs, going through airport security,” Verdino said.

Yotsuda discussed a similar sentiment, explaining how he must be careful with his cell phone on the side of his body the pacemaker is on as well as with other strong magnets, in addition to being careful with doctors.

“All of my doctors...I have to notify them to let them know about the pacemaker,” he said. “I’m supposed to have X-rays done of my teeth but they’re not going to do that right now.”

To avoid detaching the leads from the heart, Yotsuda must be careful for the next few weeks to avoid using his left arm too strenuously or moving it above his shoulder.

He still doesn’t have a concrete reason for his collapse.

“Now I thought I’ve been pretty healthy all this time. And you know, this was something that just happened, and the good thing was that my heart decided to start beating again,” he said.

He also said that he heard the doctors in the emergency room discussing how rare it is for someone who flatlined to come back without being shocked. Yotsuda will be visiting the doctor again for further tests to try to figure out what

caused his incident. For now, he plans to live his life as normally as he can.

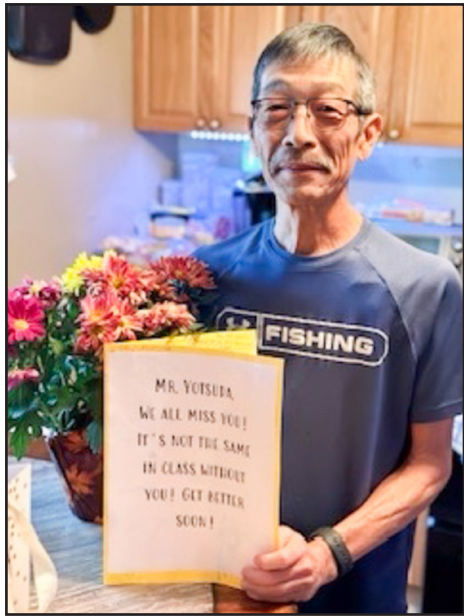
“It’s just an adjustment... knowing what you can and cannot do,” he said. “...then get back

to pretty much a normal life... baby steps toward getting back to what I normally do so I’m not giving up teaching.”

Contributing Reporting by Melissa White

Right: Science teacher David Yotsuda poses with a card that fellow science teacher Marie Rosander dropped off when he was in the hospital. Yotsuda stayed in the hospital after his heart stopped. Below: Pictured is a pacemaker similar to what was inserted into his chest next to a phone for scale. This small piece has leads in the chest that attach to chambers of the heart to ensure everything is communicating and flowing smoothly.

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY DAVID YOTSUDA



Beloved staff member switches schools



Diane Sandefur (left) poses with former school nurse Beth Banko in matching shirts. Sandefur worked as a clinic aide a few years ago, where she was referred to by students as “everyone’s mom.” PHOTO PROVIDED BY DIANE SANDEFUR

by Emmy Li
Webmaster

The brightly lit clinic is a familiar sight to many students at Pine View and was home to one of the most beloved staff members Pine View has had — Diane Sandefur.

Sandefur grew up in Bradenton and lived in Florida her

entire life, moving to Lakeland in fifth grade and then to Venice. When her son was in kindergarten at Laurel Nokomis, she volunteered in his classroom a lot; then, when her son went to Pine View in second grade, she applied for and was offered a job as a campus aide. Sandefur started at Pine

View as a teacher and monitorial aide. She not only worked in classrooms for several hours a day, but also helped out at the playground, cafeteria, media center, and clinic.

“The family atmosphere is absolutely the best part [of Pine View],” Sandefur said. “Meeting a student when they’re 7 years old and then attending their high school graduation is like being part of their family.”

When the position of clinic aide opened up, Sandefur gladly took the offer.

“I was once referred to as ‘everyone’s mom’ at Pine View,” Sandefur said. “I felt like the students knew they could come to me for anything.”

Whether students were injured or feeling ill, Sandefur always made sure the clinic was a welcoming environment for them.

“I remember going to the clinic freshman year,” eleventh-grader Felicity Liu said. “[Sandefur was] super sweet, got the job done and was really

nice to all the students coming in.”

Despite the success at her job, however, Sandefur considered leaving when COVID-19 hit. Her job suddenly became much more difficult — the stress from contact tracing, quarantining, and the constant exposure to the disease itself added up. Sandefur took the opportunity to become the middle school guidance secretary, then moved to the recently created position of assistant registrar, working with her close friend and school registrar Susan Manders.

“I learned a lot from Mrs. Manders, and I loved it,” Sandefur said.

However, as Sandefur knew Manders would never leave Pine View, there was no opportunity for career advancement in her new position. When Sandefur received an email consisting of job listings in Sarasota County, she decided to take the open registrar position at Taylor Ranch.

“I really miss seeing Ms.

Sandefur and working with her daily, but am so happy she gets to be a registrar at her own school, closer to her home, and she gets to work with a previous Pine View administrator [Tara Spielman] that she always liked,” Manders said.

Now, at Taylor Ranch, Sandefur works closer to her home, has better hours, and has better pay.

“For the past six years, most of the time I have worked seven days a week to support myself,” Sandefur said. “Each job advancement has lessened the need to work two jobs. Leaving my Pine View family is one of the hardest things I have ever done, but I feel like it was the right move at the right time.”

She summed the transition up with a look toward the future.

“[Being a registrar at Taylor Ranch comes] with a lot of responsibility, and I have a ton to learn, but I’m excited to have this opportunity,” she said.

Shining a Spotlight on New Clubs

Stories and Photos by **Elena Herman** Match Asst. Editor-in-Chief

Girls Who Code Club

For girls, breaking into the male-dominated computer science scene can be rough. Luckily, Girls Who Code Club, founded by twelfth-grader Kai Sprunger, provides a space to combat that.

Girls Who Code Club isn't so different from other coding clubs, especially when it comes to activities.

"Currently, we've been creating projects like Mad Libs, for instance, or just creative projects. It's just mainly encouraging the students to work on their own time and create projects and share with each other during the club meetings," Sprunger said.

Moreover, even if a student doesn't know anything about coding, there's a place for them in the club.

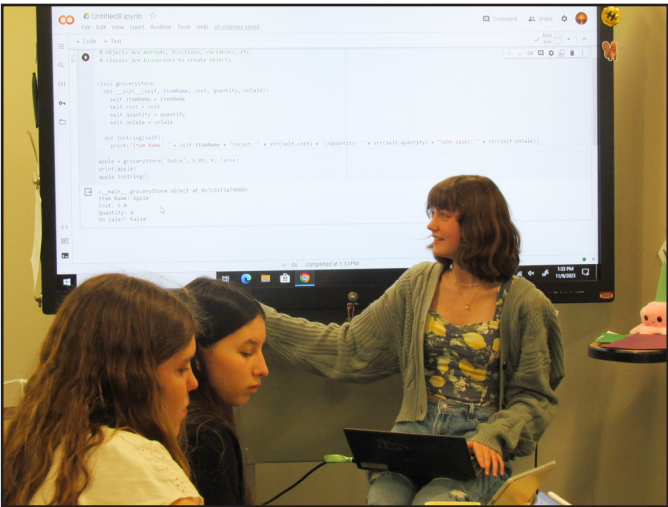
"They do teach you parts

of coding and stuff, so you learn. So yeah, regardless of your expertise, you should really consider joining the club," ninth-grader Madeleine Arsenault said.

Currently, the Thursday meetings are held in math teacher Jacquelyn Cetola's classroom from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m., where the vibe is serene and welcoming.

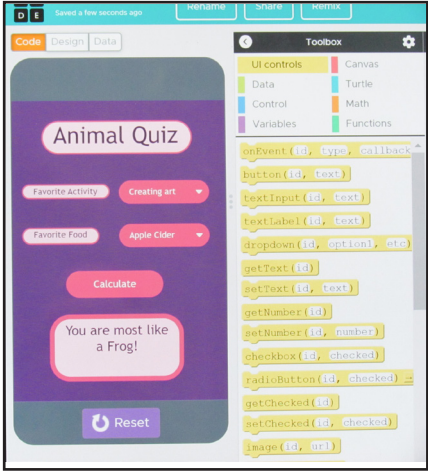
"It's kind of a small club, which is good because you can connect with everyone more easily and ask questions or ask for help," tenth-grader Calista Ream said. It's a really good community of friends."

Indeed, community is a big part of any hobby. Thanks to Sprunger, Pine View has a new coding club where girl coders can hone their skills.



Above: Twelfth-grader Kai Sprunger talks to the Girls Who Code club, referencing a coding project on the board. Sprunger founded the club to give girls a place to learn and practice coding activities. Right: One of the projects the club was working on appears on a student's computer screen. This colorful quiz tested what animal the taker was.

meets
Thursdays
1:00-2:00 p.m.
Ms. Cetola's Room



Make a Wave

Below: Members of Make a Wave club excitedly discuss something at a recent meeting. The club offers a place for community, friendship, and helping keep the beaches clean. **Right:** Club president Gigi Mattison is shocked as she gives a presentation including ocean statistics. Mattison founded the club to take action against polluted beaches.



meets
Every Other Friday
1:00-2:00 p.m.
Mr. Pauling's Room

Beaches littered with bottles, lost things, and piles of plastic are common sights in Sarasota County. For this reason, eleventh-grader Gianna Mattison founded Make a Wave club to take action against polluted shores.

"When I was [at the beach] last spring break, at the time it was super dirty because there were a bunch of tourists and stuff. And so, I had wanted to start a club so I could have something to do with my friends and make a little bit of a difference on campus," Mattison said.

At her Make a Wave club meetings, hosted in Chris Pauling's classroom every other Friday from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m., members learn about the ocean and pollution. Importantly, they plan for their next big cleanup.

"We usually do [a beach cleanup] once a month, and

sometimes we'll do more around times like after New Year's or after Thanksgiving, and we will probably do [a beach cleanup] after the holidays," said Mattison.

Overall, a big part of the Make a Wave club experience is having fun. Alongside caring for the coast, club members enjoy hanging out, giggling, and gossiping.

"My favorite part is the community. We're a very positive environment," eleventh-grader Kalyn Wiggins said.

If beaches and laughter aren't interesting enough, the club has another big perk.

"We have snacks!" eleventh-grader Mackenzie Haas said.

All in all, Make a Wave is perfect for any fun-loving beachgoers looking to score some service hours.

Ping Pong Honor Society

On a Monday morning, it's hard to drag oneself out of bed. However, Pine View's new Ping Pong Honor Society, which meets in science teacher Jay Skipper's room on Mondays from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m., makes the day less dreary with table tennis and companionship.

"I love [the] atmosphere. Everybody's having a good time and we're cheering each other on...It's all very fun," said eleventh-grader Terry Shen, who is Co-President of Ping Pong Honor Society with twelfth-grader Edden Levy.

There are many benefits to joining, including the opportunity to be with beloved students and staff.

"I get to hang out here with my friends and my favorite teachers," tenth-grader Spencer Treadway said.

Truly, joining Ping Pong Honor Society is a transcendent experience for any tabletop

sports player.

"Playing ping pong here feels like home, it feels amazing," eleventh-grader Aiden Nisberg said.

Due to a \$4,000 donation from PVA, the club is undergoing major changes. Soon, meetings will be held in the gym and the equipment will see an upgrade.

"We've been playing on chemistry tables for about a quarter...probably two quarters, but next semester...we're going to have actual tables," Shen said.

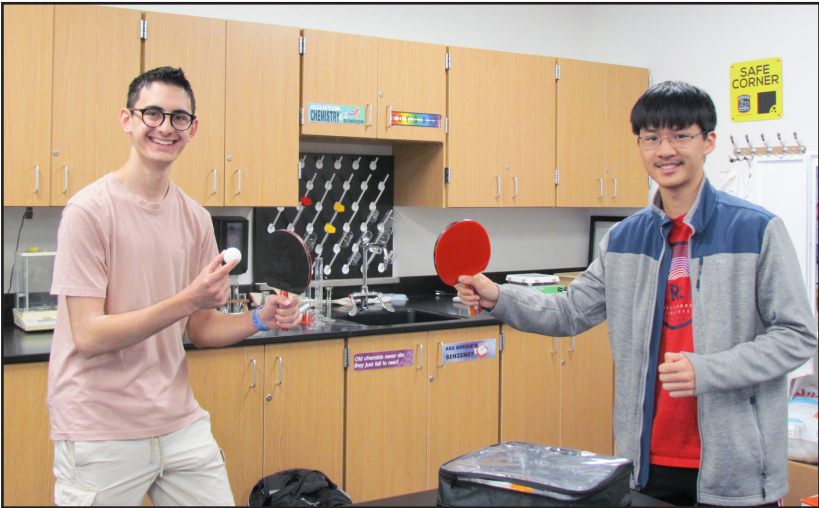
As for the future of Ping Pong Honor Society, Shen plans to practice, mentor, and eventually compete.

"We're going to have some tournaments and matches against all skill levels, so that'll be fun to compete with each other," he said.

Any table tennis enthusiast wouldn't want to miss Ping Pong Honor Society.



Top right: Ping Pong Honor Society Co-President Terry Shen gets ready to hit the ball. In the future, Shen hopes to hold club competitions in addition to practice and mentorship. Bottom right: Club member Aiden Nisberg and club co-president Terry Shen pose with their paddles. The club looks forward to having real ping pong tables in the gym soon.



meets
Mondays
1:00-2:00 p.m.
Dr. Skipper's Room or the gym

Inside the Qubit

by Jakob Roche
Co Sci-Tech Editor

No, quantum computers aren't magic. And they might not be the future of computing, either. In order to understand what this emerging field of computing means for everyone, one must first understand how it works.

Let's take a bit: the fundamental unit of computing. A bit can be said to exist in one of two states: one and zero. These bits make up the basis of binary code, the system that drives modern computing. However, quantum computers rely on something a little bit different.

As the name suggests, quantum computers work by harnessing the laws of quantum mechanics. The underlying assumption behind these laws is that fundamentally, things work differently on very tiny scales. One such difference is the idea of superposition.

At the very smallest scales, matter can occupy different states. For example, if an atom gains energy, it can be said that it's in an excited state. Without going too much into the abstract, each particle can be

described using an equation called a wave function, which describes the different possible states the particle can be in.

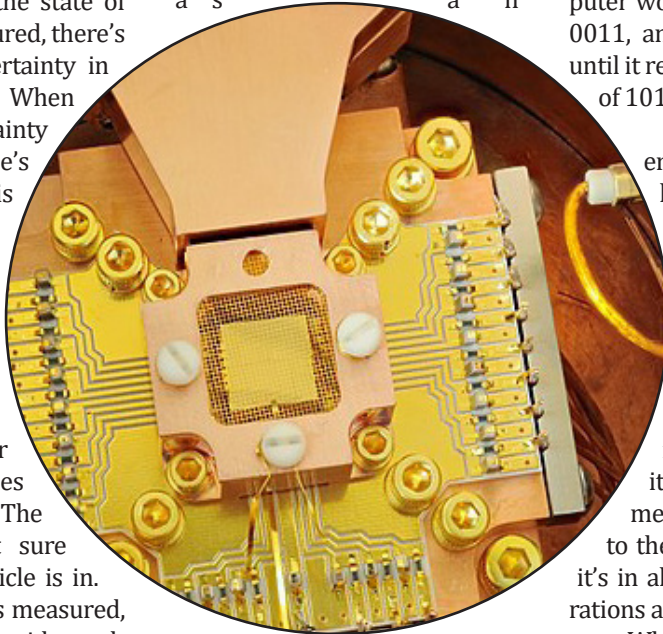
In addition, the wave function assigns probabilities to each state. Before the state of the particle is measured, there's quite a bit of uncertainty in what that state is. When there's this uncertainty about the particle's state, the particle is in what's called a superposition.

That's to say, it might be in one state, but it also might be in another. But realistically, the particle never physically occupies both of those states. The observer just isn't sure what state the particle is in. When the particle is measured, its wave function is said to collapse, and we know exactly which state the particle is in.

Let's go back to the bit. Like a particle, a bit has different states. But unlike a particle, there's never any uncertainty as to which state the bit is in. The leap from classical to quantum

computer is substituting the bit for a qubit. Unlike the bit, the qubit does have uncertainty in its state.

To demonstrate the difference, let's use the code 1011 as an



A processing unit is installed inside a quantum computer. The chip requires more tests, but it might be the key to making quantum computers faster.

PHOTO BY Y. COLOMBE

example. If one wants to use a classical computer to figure out what the code is, the computer will consider every possibility individually until it gets to the right answer. That is, the computer would count 0000, 0001, 0011, and so on and so forth until it reaches the desired code of 1011.

A quantum computer, on the other hand, has qubits that may either be a one or a zero at the same time. By pure chance, the true state of the qubits might be exactly 1011, but it might also be 1001 or 0011 for that matter. While it's an inaccurate statement, the qubit appears to the outside observer like it's in all the possible configurations at once.

When used in conjunction with a specialized algorithm and a little more quantum mechanics, the qubits can be guided toward the correct answer. Rather than having a classical computer slowly run through all the possibilities, the wave function of the qubit can be col-

lapsed, and the correct answer can be found exponentially faster.

Now, this happens to be very useful in a select group of activities, namely doing a very specific set of math problems that would quite literally take thousands of years for our very best supercomputers to solve. Or, if in the wrong hands, a quantum computer running a special algorithm could crack our best encryption technologies and put everyone's data at risk.

Other than that, we still haven't found much use for quantum computers. In most everyday tasks, like gaming or doing office work, classical computers far exceed the capabilities of the best quantum computers.

The future of this technology is up in the air. Quantum computers could solve so-called unsolvable problems, and advance our understanding of the world around us. Or, they could be used to carry out cyberattacks and hold data hostage. If one thing's for sure, though, don't expect to be using one anytime soon.

The Sky is the Limit

by Aly Zaleski
Humor Editor

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? Is that eleventh-grader Rayna Parker flying it?

To many, aviation seems an impossibility. For Parker, however, the sky is the limit. She began working with the Teen Aircraft Factory of Manasota or The Factory around two years ago with the intent of gaining volunteer hours. Now, after a handful of mistakes and a truckload of effort, Parker is building planes.

The Factory works to create a welcoming and engaging environment for all who choose to sign up.

"I actually got to start building right away and I really enjoyed it," Parker said.

Along with her mentors, she has made great progress.

"They help us go through the steps together... then whatever you need to do, you just go and do it," Parker said.

She described how during her time at the Factory, work was separated into two sections: engineering and electrical.



The engineering work takes part mostly on the build of the plane. All the parts and instructions come in a kit for volunteers to examine thoroughly and work on. Despite having instructions, mistakes such as losing or breaking parts can and have happened. Often times, they're not cheap, either. The main steering pad comes in at around \$5,000, while an engine can work its way up to \$35,000. This really tests the drive and focus of volunteers.

The electrical work focuses on wiring and interior mechanics of the plane such as the main controls. The work is tedious, but it brings all the hard work of the engineering together.

Both parts of the plane are worked on by all the volunteers. Groups are formed that switch between the different work sites of the plane. Parker describes enjoying this kind of cycle, as it gives her time not only to get to know more about her fellow volunteers, but to also learn more from their experiences. All the time they spend together really works to build that community.

"We're a team," Parker says, "It takes two years, but ... we're getting faster."

The work of many volunteers of all ages has influenced some of their decisions when venturing beyond school. Some have gone on to work in the air force while others have gone to school

Rayna Parker stands by the airplane that she helped build. Parker has been building planes since 2021.

PHOTO BY RAYNA PARKER

for engineering. Volunteer and mentor Ron Handley has seen the growth of these volunteers firsthand.

"We're building the kid into an adult ..., the plane is a byproduct," Handley said.

Parker's progress is a perfect example of this. Handley has witnessed her go from having no knowledge of aviation to flying a plane she built.

More recently, Parker has begun to help in the mentoring process.


"When [Parker's] there, she's working," Handley said.

Her work — seen most often in the electrical side of things — has inspired many volunteers at the Factory and has often been viewed as a lesson for newer members to learn from.

As well as building, Parker takes part in flying the planes at rallies held by The Factory. People get to sign up to ride in the planes built at The Factory and view all the volunteers' hard work firsthand. Handley recalls Parker — showing growth in not just her handiwork, but her character as well — stepping up to fly a plane for the first time. Even after the time and effort of building a plane, it must be hard to imagine being behind the wheel of one.


After Handley's time at the Factory, he describes their mission as one that encourages volunteers "to be the best they can be at what they choose to be." Parker's time as well as many others at the Factory will help to drive their goals forward and give them a newfound confidence in their abilities.

SCIENCE CONSPIRACY THEORIES



FAKE MOON LANDING
ORIGIN: EARLY-MID 1970S
SPREAD BY: "WE NEVER WENT TO THE MOON: AMERICA'S THIRTY BILLION DOLLAR SWINDLE," A BOOK RELEASED IN 1976 BY BILL KASING.

FLAT EARTH THEORY
ORIGIN: 1600s
SPREAD BY: PROTESTANT CHRISTIANS TO GO AGAINST CATHOLIC TEACHINGS, AND THE THEORY REEMERGED IN THE 1800s FOR MODERN CONSPIRATORS.





5G CAUSING COVID-19
ORIGIN: 2020
SPREAD BY: SOCIAL MEDIA DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. IT IS SO POPULAR THAT THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION PUT OUT A STATEMENT TO FACT CHECK THE THEORY.

THE SCRAMBLERS

Below Photo: The Scramblers Band members pose for photo in front of the Media Center. This is the same spot outside the library that the band had a pop-up concert on November 18th of last year. They played Christmas songs along side other Jazz Band members. PHOTO BY Robyn Schoenberg



Above Photo: The Scramblers Band pose for photo from left to right, Matthew Castillo (11) on saxophone, David Gagliardo (11) on guitar, Evan Rollings Zepponi (11) on guitar, Mirai Mehta (10) on drums, and Ethan Chan (12) on guitar. PHOTO BY Robyn Schoenberg

BAND



BLUES JUNK JAZZ FUNK: YES!

Behind the Scenes of an Up and Coming Band

By Robyn Schoenberg
Entertainment Editor

The sounds of music can be heard from outside the band room, but it isn't one of Pine View's bands, it's The Scramblers. Tenth grader Mirai Mehta sits at the drum set while eleventh grader Matthew Castillo sets up his saxophone. Eleventh graders David Gagliardo, Evan Rollings Zepponi, and twelfth grader Ethan Chan plug in and tune their guitars. The members start playing and brainstorming in preparation for this year's Variety Show.

At first Rollings Zepponi was helping Chan and Gagliardo with playing the guitar. The three of them and Castillo started jamming and later Mehta joined as the drums player.

the members wear glasses. It then evolved a few times from the Sectors, to Henry Fishe and the Sectors, (a name the group thought was funny), to Henry Fishe and the Scramblers, but they finally cut it down to just The Scramblers.

"The big thing with The Scramblers is that we wanted to make some kind of thing that was based around each of us being a food," said Rollings Zepponi. "...there was a big argument over who would be muffin versus bagel, that was the big thing, plus pancake versus waffle."

The band's genre hard to pin down, as they play a wide variety of songs such as blues, jazz, rock, and funk. Each member has their own music taste, so settling on which songs to play can be difficult.

"What we can all really decide on, I suppose, is jams, because jams don't have to be tied to a specific genre it just has to be tied to 'can we make something random out of this?' and that's the point," Rollings Zepponi said. "If we can all just add onto it in our own form, bringing in ties from the genres that we like, then that is a compromise on our part."

They have covered songs such as "Creep" by Radiohead and "Ramrod" by Duane Eddy and they have some original pieces called Breakfast at Mary's and Basketball Blues.

"My favorite memory was probably when Evan

busted out his 'Breakfast at Mary's' chords and we started playing over that. It was like, 'Whoa, we have actual potential,' and that started my passion, like deep passion, for the band," Castillo said.

The process behind creating their music tends to start in a similar way.

"Basically, how it starts is just it comes from a seed of an idea... Like for Breakfast at Mary's, really all it is is two chords that I kind of built upon,...gaining layers and layers until it becomes something more stable," said Rollings Zepponi. "Once it becomes stable, then you can play around with it and see how flexible it is as a song and melody."

Gagliardo puts it simply, "You shove five guys in a room, an hour later, you got a whole finished product here. So, I think it's just five guys, great ideas, you know, our heads are filled with crazy thoughts sometimes and it just comes straight out of that."

The group meets up when they can, but finding the time with their busy schedules can be a challenge.

"Whenever we don't have a full band meeting, it's common for Ethan, David, and I to just kind of mess around for a bit and see what we can get done," Castillo said. "Usually it's nothing until one of us forces like a chord progression on each other and we just see if we get any cool ideas with that."

Rollings Zepponi said most

band meetings last a couple of hours but the first chunk is spent to "settle in and everything. ...Then about the last 10-15 minutes, that's when it condenses down into actual focus because of the time crunch, and that's when, I guess ...procrastination forces passion."

When it comes down to it, the members show up. In the weeks leading up to the Variety Show last year, they met as often as they could, practicing almost every other day.

Another major performance in The Scramblers career was their popup Christmas concert outside the media center last year. They found a lone outlet outside the library and set up the whole band plus amplifiers straight from that. Some other jazz band members joined them and "fans" had to hold down the music so it wouldn't fly away.

"We actually got a tip of around 50 cents to 75 cents in quarters, I got a gumball," Rollings Zepponi said. "...it very much felt like a bringing together of people and it kind of reminds us of how music can help everyone."

After spending so much time working together, the members have formed somewhat of a love-hate relationship.

"Sometimes I want to yell at Matt, and then outside of rehearsals, it's like, 'you know, Matt, you're an interesting guy.' And then some days I want to scream at Ethan because it's like 'Ethan you're off tempo, you're dragging, you mess this whole line up. But then at the end of the day I appreciate

you Ethan B. Chan," said Gagliardo. "And with Evan, I could go one for hours about Evan, so I'm not going to do that right now."

A s m u c h

PLAYING SOON
featured in
Variety Show

things can get frustrating during rehearsals, all of the members have a really great bond.

"Yeah, we actually love each other, sometimes, most of the time," Castillo said. "Like in this interview we're all laughing behind the scenes."

The members have all improved their musical abilities since joining, especially Chan, who had only been playing guitar for a month when he joined. Gagliardo and Mehta also got into Pine View's jazz band last year, and Mehta attributes a lot of his success to being in The Scramblers.

The band hopes to take their talents further by meeting more often and doing more gigs.

"We still have a lot of potential we have not untapped yet," Castillo said.

Rollings Zepponi said, "I guess the plan for the future is just to keep doing what we've been doing, and if it gets better, then it gets better, and if it doesn't, well then we're going to make the best out of it."

You shove five guys in a room, an hour later, you got a whole finished product."

David Gagliardo,
11th-grader

Like any great band, the group needed a name. The first idea was the Sectors because Rollings Zepponi was a big James Bond fan, and a lot of

Crocheters of Pine View

The Story of Three Pine View Students Craft

By Alex Lieberman, Allie Chung, and Ana Easter

Asst. News Editor, Opinion Editor, Match Layout Artist

Up, down, in, out, back, and forth: tenth-grader Camille Wright guides her needle through a colorful piece of yarn, weaving and binding it to form an intricate design. With needles and thread, Wright brings a paper pattern into 3D existence: she crochets.

The 1970s was a decade full of social change, tie-dye, and, most interestingly, the rise of the art of crocheting. This craft involves interweaving yarn, string, or other materials using hooks to create textiles.

While crocheting can be complicated to learn and requires much patience, the benefits abound. Three Pine View students have figured out how to master this art, and Wright is a perfect example.

She began knitting at a young age but was later introduced to crocheting. These two crafts, while seemingly similar, involve quite different processes of looping thread and weaving.

"I started out knitting when I was seven with my mom, then over quarantine, I tried to get back into it but turned to crocheting instead and just stuck with it," said Wright, who prefers the process of crocheting over knitting.

She crochets a variety of items including bags, sweat-ers, and gifts for her friends.

"Any time it's one of my friend's birthdays, I just think it's cute to make them something, so I've made a couple of stuffed animals and things like that," Wright said.

She also enjoys crocheting sweaters to wear. The process of crocheting articles of clothing like sweaters can be difficult, but she said the customization and the ability to wear them makes the process worthwhile.

"They're just clothing items that I can still wear when it gets cold and are regularly parts of my wardrobe," she said.

Wright enjoys watching how far she's come and hopes to continue crocheting in the future to create as much as she can.

Similarly, what started off as a simple way to kill time has developed into much more for tenth-grade crocheter Ginger Kreithen.

Finding crocheters on social media platforms such as Instagram and Pinterest, Kreithen was inspired by their work and decided to pursue her own crocheting journey.

"My favorite memory was when I made my first piece of clothing....And I guess it really stuck with me because then I realized that crochet is something that you can use as a tool to create," Kreithen said.

Kreithen enjoys gift-ing small coasters and accessories to her friends, and crocheting has always been a way for her to provide happiness for her loved ones. However, she aspires to take her talent to the next level.

Kreithen has hopes to utilize her skills for a potential source of revenue and so far she has been successful. As a member of the Boys and Girls Club, Kreithen participated in the Young Entrepreneurs Program in which students pitch their business ideas to a panel of investors.

After presenting her proposal for a crochet tutoring business, Kreithen was one of the few winners in the program. Currently, she is deciding how to execute her idea, and, as a self-taught crocheter, Kreithen's business would allow aspiring crocheters to have access to mentors.

Leaving her final word of advice for aspiring crocheters, Kreithen said, "The best thing to do is get help from somebody else. See them crochet in real life."

Likewise, twelfth-grader Winter Gray can often be found spending his free time creating amigurumi animals, which is the creation of small, knit-stuffed creatures.

For Gray, there are countless benefits to crocheting.

"I find it really relaxing and it helps me focus," Gray said.

Because of this, Gray

sometimes crochets in class for enhanced concentration or while watching something on television.

Another perk of crocheting, he adds, is giving life to creations based on movies, shows, and games he likes.

"I have a little Junimo plush from Stardew Valley that I like," he said.

Stardew Valley is a popular online farm simulation game.

Gray utilizes patterns he finds on the internet and occasionally tests them out for other people who crochet.

He also participates in the Loose Ends project, in which volunteers finish creations that someone else started but passed away before being able to complete themselves.

"[I]t carries a lot of weight, because, you know, this is something that someone else really cared about...[I]t's weird, finishing it for someone else, but also I just hope it brings some kind of comfort and closure to the family..." Gray said.

Crocheting has become more than just a hobby for Gray — it's a way for him to express his creativity and contribute to a meaningful cause.

Because of its many appeals, crocheting is popular amongst social media and even in Pine View. The simple act of weaving yarn can enhance focus, promote creativity, and contribute to the local community through gift-giving, volunteering, and more.



UPCYCLING

Clothes



Use a 1:1 water bleach mixture and an old paintbrush to create... **bleached designs.**

Make use of scrap **fabric patches.**

Pin the design down, then hand sew. This takes practice! Mod podge is an easy alternative.



If all else fails, **cut alterations.**

Off the shoulder: Start cutting about an inch from the original neckline until reaching the middle. Repeat on the other side.

Cropping is another easy upcycling method. Save the fabric scraps for other projects.

Unconventional Christmas Movies

by Sanya Patel

Asst. Editor-in-Chief

The majority of Americans associate this time of year with warm festive ideas, like curling up in a pile of blankets and watching a heartwarming holiday movie. It's always nice to watch something nostalgic like "The Polar Express" or "Frosty the Snowman", sparking the holiday cheer within your home. But

there are some pretty unconventional holiday movies out there that are worth the watch this time of year. Some of these movies carry holiday themes while others have a chill in the air that makes them perfect to watch this time of year. Here are 3 movie recommendations that you should consider watching this holiday season.



This story is about a quiet secluded town in Covington, Pennsylvania, during the 19th century, living "peacefully" surrounded by the woods. Due to a longstanding pact made by the townspeople, to prevent the creatures living within from attacking the town no one is to enter the woods

It isn't until one of the villagers is attacked by another person forcing the town to send

The Village

someone through the woods and beyond the border to acquire proper medical treatment for the wounded villager. The only catch is that the girl they choose to send out is blind and forced to navigate through the woods and back, relying on her other senses.

This movie will have you questioning the truth every step of the way. With the twigs snapping at the feet of the monster and autumn leaves falling around the protagonist as she journeys through the woods, you will love to curl up with a bowl of popcorn for this movie.



The Visit

If you are interested in "The Visit" it tells the story of two siblings spending a week at their grandparents' house during the winter season. They have never met their grandparents before and immediately notice weird noises during their first night.

Under strict orders not to leave their rooms past 9:30 p.m., they investigate anyway and observe extremely bizarre behaviors by their grandparents, putting themselves in severe

danger. Even though they yell to their mother for help, they are forced to wait out their stay and battle for their survival.

With this movie's unique camera angles and active plot line, this is one scary film you won't want to miss this season.

A Christmas Story



From the title, this may seem like your typical Holly Jolly Christmas movie; however, you would be delightfully surprised. This movie contains many of the messy and real depictions of family during the holidays.

Depicted in a series of vignettes, the movie tells the story of Ralphie Park-

er recounting the Christmas of 1940 and his life as a boy desiring a BB gun at age 9. Through many ups and downs of his family, friends, and himself, the magic of this specific Christmas is one he remembered for the rest of his life.

This movie is an easy laugh, teaching you to appreciate the little things in life that make this time of year magical.

Christmas Reads

These reading recommendations from the Torch staff presents some of our favorite books to enjoy during the long breaks, weekends, and free time in general. Especially the winter time, which presents the perfect opportunity to get comfortable with a good book, complete with the chilly weather and two-week break.

The Spanish Love Deception by Elena Armas

A Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes by Suzanne Collins

Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire by J.K. Rowling

Little Women by Lousia May Alcott

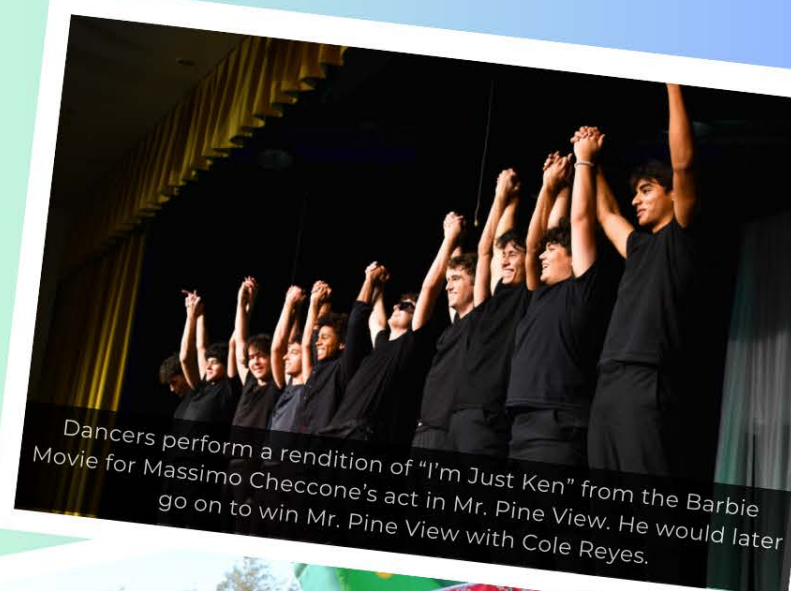
Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens

A Little Princess by Frances Hodgson Burnett

GRAPHIC BY SIVAN LEVY

A SEMESTER IN REVIEW

This past semester a multitude of traditions took place, including Mr. and Miss Pine View and the Pine View Fair. Here's a look at some of the memories captured during these performances.



Dancers perform a rendition of "I'm Just Ken" from the Barbie Movie for Massimo Checcone's act in Mr. Pine View. He would later go on to win Mr. Pine View with Cole Reyes.



Twelfth-grader, Kody Tran, stacks jenga blocks at the Odyssey of the Mind booth at the Pine View Fair.



The cast of Miss Pine View poses for a photo after completing the show. Claire Opal-Levine was crowned Miss Pine View.

GRAPHIC BY ISABELLA KULAWIK

Torch Tries: Mini-golf

by Lindsay Luberecki
News Editor

As tenth-grader Sivan Levy remarked, there's a certain stereotype that Torch students may not be the best at athletics. This thought aside, on November 5, five Torch members set out to play a competitive,

I (Lindsay Luberecki, News Editor) came along to keep score.

Upon arrival, we took in the pirate-themed course — wooden, ship-like structures and red and white flags surrounded the holes. At the beginning of the course, the enclosed pond with about 20 baby alliga-

would "get an eagle and 13 birdies....I have a lot of golf in my blood."

The game began slowly, other than Zhu's almost-hole-in-one on Hole 1.

At Hole 3, Lenerz declared, "I don't think you guys are ready for this," and promptly missed the ball completely, taking a swing over it.

Additionally, Zhu hit her ball off the course into the bushes.

The luck turned on Hole 4, when Herman scored a hole-in-one.

"I just needed a little warm-up," Herman said.

The next few holes brought water into the equation. Hole 5 ran through a tunnel that had a small pond of water near the hole, which proved to be an obstacle for some of our players. I checked in one-third of the way through the game.

"[I] started off confident," Zhu said. "...got a little humbled by that water but still think I have it in the bag."

"I came into this thinking I was the worst. Watching their balls go into the sewer water has made me feel a bit better about myself," Lenerz added to Zhu's comment.

The game continued with more water holes and pi-

rate-themed obstacles. As the competition drew on, tensions started to build between Torch members. For instance, Zhu was heard booing Lenerz, salvaging her comment with, "just kidding, you got this."

Personal connections also began to be formed.

"This ball is like my baby," Levy said.

Checking in with our four players after Hole 12, two-thirds of the way through the game, revealed some interesting observations.

"You know, I really wanted to prove people wrong who said Torch students couldn't be athletic and couldn't play mini-golf, but I think I've given up a little bit," Levy said. However, she also commented, "You will notice the results of my seriousness about mini-golf."

"I think my dad would be proud," Herman said.

The rest of the game continued on a similar note, with forfeits on holes and acceptances of scores of 6 on a par 2. However, smiles and laughs still abounded. After the 18th hole, I asked each player how they thought they did before tallying the scores.

Levy predicted that she beat Zhu. On the

contrary, Lenerz predicted that Zhu won, and similarly, Herman guessed that she would follow Zhu in the lineup. Zhu had an interesting answer.

"In the lineup...you know, that's a great question. Interesting question. According to my calculations, I'm going to say I'm last so that when I get the real results I feel better," she said.

And feel better, she did. With a score of 59 (the course par was 38), Zhu came in first place. She was followed by Lenerz (60.5), Levy (65.5), and Herman (68). Yes, half-points were given. The game of golf can get pretty wild.

Reflecting on her win, Zhu said, "If I'm being the most real I've ever been in my core, I was not expecting it. I know I started off confident but that was all lies. So I think the moral of the story is to believe in yourself."

Lenerz's biggest takeaway wasn't coming in second, but was in fact feeding the baby alligators: "That alligator is really cute."

All in all, Torch Tries Mini-golf was a success. Our players had a great time, and they loved Smugglers Cove.

"I was in it to have a good time, and I did. It's a beautiful day and I have great friends," Herman said.



Grinning in front of the golf course, five Torch students look forward to the upcoming mini-golf match. On November 5th, they met up at Smugglers Cove Adventure Golf to try their hands at mini-golf.

Pictured from left to right: Sivan Levy, Lindsay Luberecki, Ava Lenerz, Jiayi Zhu, and Elena Herman

PHOTO BY SIVAN LEVY

eventful, and exciting game of mini-golf.

Match Editor-in-Chief Jiayi Zhu, Match Assistant Editor Ava Lenerz, Web Copy Editor Sivan Levy, and Match Assistant Editor Elena Herman headed to Smugglers Cove Adventure Golf in Sarasota to play against each other while

tors was also a large point of interest, especially to Lenerz. The game was about to begin.

"[I'm feeling] confident," Zhu said. "I basically feel like I already won."

Herman shared a similar viewpoint on her upcoming performance, predicting that she



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GRAPHIC BY KAI SPRUNGER

Left: Watching as a golf ball soar by, four Torch students await in apprehension to see if it scores. At the end of the match, Jiayi Zhu came in first place, racking up the most points. Pictured from left to right: Herman, Zhu, Luberecki, and Lenerz

PHOTO BY KAI SPRUNGER

Knot Too Shabby



Tightening the sail, tenth-grader Natalie Hoffman gets ready to rotate the boat, smoothly navigating the water as she sails. Wanting to carry on her grandfather's legacy, Hoffman is planning to continue sailing beyond her high school years into college.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY NATALIE HOFFMAN

by Colette Freeman

Entertainment Asst. Editor

In the bustling halls of Pine View School, where academic excellence often takes center stage, one student is making waves of her own kind. Natalie Hoffman is a tenth-grader who is a dedicated and skilled sailor; not only conquering the school's

academic challenges, but also the open waters.

Inspired by her late grandfather, who shared her love for sailing, Natalie continues the sport with a deep sense of purpose.

"My grandmother invested in my sailing career, so I do it for her, to carry on my grandfather's legacy," Hoffman said.

man said.

Maintaining a balance between academics and sailing is no easy feat, but Hoffman has managed to find harmony in her busy schedule, even going above and beyond by adding extra classes.

Hoffman aspires to take sailing seriously, especially in college, and she finds inspira-

tion from others who do sailing.

"I look up to many of the people on the sailing GP team - the national sailing team. This one guy did F1 races and now he's doing sailing, which I think is cool," Hoffman said.

Her commitment to sailing extends beyond the typical schedule, demonstrating her passion for the sport and her determination to excel beyond expectations.

Hoffman finds strength in sailing, and sees herself taking it seriously and continuing it long term.

"I'm basing off where I go to college whether they have a sailing team or not. Sailing basically takes up most of my time," Hoffman said.

Both Hoffman and fellow sailor, Mia Quijano say that sailing helps not only with quick reaction time and reflexes, but also with logical components.

"We learn about how to read the wind on the water, and that all comes from our coaches, or our friends, because we are all at different levels of experience," said Hoffman, emphasizing the collaborative and educational aspects of the sailing commu-

nity.

Both sailors explain how on the water, sometimes different personalities, or "alter egos" come out to help them sail.

"Sometimes Natalie can seem mean, but it's not as mean as she's in control [of the water]." Quijano said.

As described by her teammates, Natalie is determined, skilled, and focused when sailing.

Hoffman's perseverance in the sport has propelled her to excel in events and competitions throughout the state.

"I almost got first place at one of the west coast competitions here - Florida West Coast Competitions. My 2021 year I was placing top three in every single [event]." Hoffman said.

As the accomplished sailor continues to chart her course on both academic and nautical fronts, her journey serves as an inspiration for her peers and a testament to the transformative power of passion, dedication, and the pursuit of one's dreams.

"I've made lots of friends and found something I really enjoy doing," she said.

Lets Par-Tee

by Sora Fancher

News Asst. Editor

Underneath the vast blue sky and the rolling hills of fresh-cut grass, she stood, focused on the golf course, ready and determined. Wearing a crisp white polo shirt and khaki shorts, her focused gaze was fixed on the distant flag fluttering at the edge of the manicured green — a prize in her sights. The anticipation hung in the air as she tightened her grip on the club, ready to unleash a swing at the ball. Pine View eleventh-grader Emily Fung not only plays golf in her free time but also is a member of the Riverview High School girls golf team.

Inspired by her parents, Fung began playing golf in fifth grade, eventually finding the activity to be like a breath of fresh air from technology. Prior to playing for Riverview, she played for the Pine View girls team in sixth grade before COVID-19 hit the very next year. While things for the world took a turn for the worse, Fung's golfing changed for the better.

"I would say, throughout the majority of my golfing time, I was probably not the best golfer from like fifth grade up until sixth grade," Fung said. "And it wasn't until like the COVID-19 year actually, where I started getting a lot better and that was because I was practicing every day, and just spending a few hours every day working on my swing. That wasn't something I had done previously. It

was probably the time I had improved the most because it was something I was spending time on my own and something I cared about."

For Riverview, or any team for that matter, the sportsmanship and relationships between players, coaches, and more are crucial. Riverview team eleventh-graders Olivia Casane and Ellee Liang shared experiences about Fung's playing style and personality.

“She’s always smiling, and happy, and has such a bubbly personality”
Olivia Casane,
Golf Teammate

"The team views Emily as a very caring and fun person," Liang said.

Casane said "The girls Riverview golf team sees Emily as a ray of sunshine. She's always smiling, and happy, and has such a bubbly personality. We always look forward to seeing her as well as watching her amazing performance in golf."

Casane also expressed the calm and reassuring personality of Fung that facilitates

playing in events like tryouts or tournaments.

"I remember meeting Emily about a year and four months ago at our golf tryouts for sophomore year. I remember being so nervous. I was paired up with Emily, and she instantly made me feel more confident in myself, assuring me that we were going to do amazing," Casane said.

Competitions in any sport are an exhilarating, nerve-racking, but exciting and essential part of sports to test the knowledge and skill of a player.

Throughout the many competitions of middle and high school, whether that's been competing solo or on a team, she has won many awards and often has placed first.

Competitions test the knowledge and skill of the player under aspects, like pressure, requiring players to learn and possess important qualities like: sportsmanship, hard work, perseverance, optimism, critical thinking, etc. Competitions that Fung frequently competes in are the regionals or states competitions.

"So this year, our team we, we won. Well, we got second in regionals," Fung said.

Competing in various tournaments, Fung excels not only in winning multiple awards, but as a human and team player as well. In the face of pressure, she exemplifies important qualities like sportsmanship, hard work, and optimism.



Golf club in hand and eyes on the target, eleventh-grader Emily Fung swings at the golf ball and scores. Fung has been playing golf since she was in fifth grade and currently plays for the Riverview High School girls golf team.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY EMILY FUNG

Total Drama Island: Camp PineViewawaka

by Megan Ma

Sports Asst. Editor

Off the west coast of Florida, on a small island near a town named Sarasota, stood a tall man with a beard.

"Welcome to Camp PineViewawaka, my name is Chris McLenerz and I am your host! Today, six teachers will be competing for the title of Teacher of the Year while representing their respective subject," McLenerz said. "Here are our contestants!"

A speedboat zoomed past, dropping off six mysterious figures. Emerging from the shadows, John Schweig, Jason Miller, Lourdes Perez, Victor Mongello, Summer Grantham, and Haley Brown come into view.

"Okay contestants, for our first challenge we are going to be playing the classic game, Jeopardy! Let's move to the arena! Oh, and you have 3 minutes to get there or get disqualified," McLenerz said, shouting from the roof with his megaphone.

The teachers looked up with despair as McLenerz shouted out.

"It's on the other side of camp, how will I get there!" Schweig thought to himself.

Sprinting as fast as they could, the teachers ran faster than ever before, trekking through the bushes and running into trees. Stumbling behind the group, "I'm not going to make it. I have to get there quick!" Brown thought.

Searching around, she found a shortcut through some obvious fake vines. "These are clearly plastic, why did I not notice this before?"

As Brown pushed through, she found a yellow brick path, leading straight to the Jeopardy arena. She sprinted towards the building with the clock counting down the time.

Brown crossed first, with the rest of the teachers following close behind, except one.

As it hit the final 10 seconds, Mongello emerged from the deep forest with rips in his shirt, he had clearly been caught in the bushes. He slowly stumbled towards the finish line, but the clock flashed a bright red zero right as he approached the building.

"Ohh, sorry. Looks like you didn't make it. You will have to ride the boat back HOME!" McLenerz said menacingly from the bushes.

"How did he even get there?" thought Mongello as he shamefully moped back to the dock he just arrived from.

"All right contestants, since you all made it before the timer, you have successfully completed the first challenge! Now, who wants to play some jeopardy?" McLenerz said. "The categories are history, geography, science, sports, and movies!"

One by one, the teachers took turns answering questions, nervously racking their brains for the correct answers. As the intense game started wrapping up, Schwieg and Perez were tied for last place. Schweig knew he had to go for the \$1000 history question to pull ahead and leave Perez behind.

"How many years did the Hundred Years' War last?" Flashed across the board.

"This is easy!" Schweig thought to himself, but at the moment, he couldn't seem to be able to remember the answer. "This is a trick question, the conflict lasted 116 years but 35 of those years were not considered wartime, so it is really 81 years. The name is misleading, but which one is the right answer?"

"What is 116?" Schwieg hesitantly said.

"That is correct! And this concludes our game of jeopardy!" McLenerz said, "Our winner is... Mr. Schweig! Nice one. Sorry to see you go Señora Perez."

Perez walked away with her head down, not because she lost, but because she knew she would have to go back to her rowdy Spanish class.

"Wow, now there are only four teachers remaining. Each one of you wants to win Teacher of the Year while representing your own subject. The next contest is an open note test. Let's see how stressful these are if you did not study the material," McLenerz said. "Let's spin the wheel to see what subject this test is going to be on, and some of you may have an advantage!"

McLenerz walked towards a massive wheel, spinning it around and around

"I didn't know you could draw Brad Pitt!"

Chris McLenerz,
Total Drama Island
Host

before it stopped on a large green section labeled "SCIENCE". Miller smiled, knowing he wore his "Science is Magic" shirt today.

"Take your seats. You have 25 minutes to complete the full test."

Ready...set...go!" McLenerz said, excitedly waving his hands.

The remaining few teachers started scribbling furiously and flipping pages like never before, only to realize that they could not find the information they needed for the test.

"All right, your time is up! Put your pencils down and turn in your tests. Whoever has the lowest test score will have to say goodbye to the rest and return to Pine View."

The teachers handed in their tests, all knowing that they didn't complete it, hoping that what they had been able to do was enough to get them to the final round.

"It looks like our loser this round was able to stay out of trouble so far. Unfortunately, you didn't pull through this time. Sorry to see you leave, Mrs. Grantham." McLenerz said, waving goodbye. "Since you've been pretty quiet this entire game, are there any parting words you would like to say?"

"Calc u later!" Grantham said, and without another word, turned around and left the island.

"The next contest is speed-grading! You will each be given a stack of homework assignments and tests to grade. Let's see who can enter them into Gradebook first, and who will sadly leave our group afterwards. Let's go!" McLenerz started to back up.

After a daunting three and a half hours, both Ms. Brown and Mr. Miller had finished their grading together. To McLenerz's disappointment, there was a bit of chatting in between papers.

At the time Brown
a n d

Miller finished, Schweig was still working, very slowly to say the least. He had taken a quick Playboi Carti concert detour with his son and cracked some jokes that were followed by silence.

"Aww, see you soon Mr. Schweig. Now we are down to the final two. Ms. Brown, representing art, and Mr. Miller, the winner of our previous round, representing science. It is down to this last contest, and I'm sorry to say Mr. Miller, but we will be doing Artistic Mayhem! There are five minutes on the timer. You will have to draw a picture of me, and I will judge the winner. It all comes down to this."

Brown and Miller sat apprehensively at the table with a large sheet of paper in front of each of them. A bead of sweat rolled down Miller's neck as he knew that he did not have the upper hand anymore.

"And your time starts... NOW!"

The showdown begun as both teachers started sketching furiously.

The alarm went off as McLenerz announced, "Your time is up! Put those pencils down and bring your masterpieces to me."

After staring deep into the souls of the caricatures on the two pieces of paper, McLenerz spoke up.

"The winner of Teacher of the Year is... Ms. Haley Brown! I mean, come on, look at this handsome man! I didn't know you could draw Brad Pitt!"

Brown sobbed tears of joy, holding up the plaque of honor. She had worked so hard to make it this far and pulled through in the end with her artistic skills!

GRAPHIC BY MEGAN MA



The Big Bad Wolf

by Elena Herman

Match Asst. Editor-in-Chief

Out of all the tribes of Wolfingers that inhabited Europe in the 1700s, Scott Wolfinger's ancestors were the most peculiar. Their occupation, as the Wolfinger name suggests, was the hunting of wolves. However, these particular Wolfingers displayed an uncanny love for long, unbiased conversations, which would eventually lead them to abandon wolf hunting altogether.

On the day that the Wolfingers stopped hunting wolves, they went to watch a game of football. To their surprise, some local wolves were rooting for the same team as they were. At first, the Wolfingers reacted violently, but after bonding over fantasy football predictions, they realized that wolves and Wolfingers have much in common. This led to the creation of the Wolf-Wolfer treaty of 1708, which established peace between the two sects indefinitely.

Vying for new business ventures, the Wolfingers geared their efforts towards wolf-friendly areas. For example, the most successful enterprise was the "Great Wolf Lodge" hotel, opened in 1724 by Adalwolf Wolfinger. The Great Wolf Lodge boasted

themed suites, a twenty-four hour buffet, and an indoor waterpark.

In the early nineteenth century, many Great Wolf Lodges, and other similar establishments, shut down due

er, due to their supernatural talent for hunting wolves, Jacob and Doris survived without resorting to cannibalism.

Doris and Jacob's breach of the Wolf-Wolfer treaty had terrible effects for American Wolfingers. Many wolves were high status members of society, and started excluding Wolfingers from town gatherings. Wolves drove Wolfingers out of their towns and homes by the dozens.

Fearing wolf prosecution, most Wolfingers relocated to California. This only worsened their problems, however, as settlers participating in the California Gold Rush would mistake the Wolfinger men's shiny, bald heads for gold. Wherever they went, the Wolfingers were followed by a gold-hun-

gry, and subsequently angry, mob.

After facing so much tumult in the Americas, the Wolfinger clan mostly went their separate ways. Many became lawyers, journalists, and history teachers. At Pine View School, we get to enjoy one of the finest Wolfingers yet: the beloved Scott Wolfinger.



GRAPHIC BY ELENA HERMAN

to political instability in Baldstein M a n s e n - b u r g. This led a great number of Wolfingers to immigrate to the United States of America.

Many Wolfingers, upon arrival to America, chose to head west. Unfortunately, Doris and Jacob Wolfinger traveled with the Donner party in 1846. The Donner party, for those uninformed, were a group of unwise travelers-turned-cannibals. Howev-

Where's the Money?!

A Speech and Debate Scandal

by Ava Lenerz

Match Asst. Editor-in-Chief

We all know of Speech and Debate, we might even have friends in this club, but have they mentioned to you how many fundraisers Speech and Debate has? Over the years, I've noticed that whenever I ask where the money for any Pine View event is going to, there's only one answer: Pine View Speech and Debate (PVSD). The funds from Mr. Pine View, the weekly ice cream slip and slide, the Don't Step on the Grass fund, Pin-nacle after-party in space — they all go to PVSD.

What could they possibly be doing with all the money? That is what I am here to find out.

I began by questioning the middle schoolers in the club — they're trying so hard to fit in they'll reveal anything. Unfortunately,

back to the drawing board.

I decided I needed to be stealthier about it; I went to the Pine View Fair and hid in the bushes behind their booth for six hours. As I slowly crept behind club sponsor, James Froelich, with his money box, I watched him enter his cherry red Lamborghini. I was too committed to let a 2,000-pound vehicle get in the way of finding the truth.

As he was about to speed away, I hopped into the closing door of Sanya Patel's car and told her to step on it. She was all for it, but due to traffic, it was more like a lightly-keep-your-foot-on-the-gas car chase.

We were hot on his tail, I then turned on our super secret spy music album. We followed him for 20 minutes, but then he slowed down to turn and when we got to the bend the car

I decided to try talking to Speech and Debate member Nathan DeSouza; he had to know what was happening with their funds. When questioned he began to tell me reasonable things that one might assume the money is for, but I saw right through the charade.

I interrogated him for hours until he revealed the secret

"Ok, fine. You've caught us red-handed. We keep the simulation running."

"What simulation?" I responded. But all he did was look around and then run away. I chased after him, but just like Froelich, he had disappeared.

So, you heard it here first. We live in a [REDACTED].



Torches for Sale
*All proceeds to PV
Speech and Debate

P V S D knew this as well and told them nothing, absolutely nothing, so it was

was gone. It was like he disappeared into thin air.



Scan the QR code to watch three of our Pine View teachers discover the joys of Roblox!

Aly's Average Advice

by Aly Zaleski

Humor Editor

Since my last appearance, I've had a flood of questions come in. I didn't realize how bad things have gotten lately! Thankfully, I found something that caught my attention. Something relatable. Something real. My personal partner in crime and best friend, tenth grader Steven Kortie, asked me a question that has circulated the Pine View community for centuries.

"What are some tips to pass Mrs. Stricklands class?"

Since, as previously mentioned, I spent last year traveling with the Rams, I never had the opportunity to be taught by the luminous Mrs. Strickland. In my time, I have searched far and wide for an answer to this question, but to no avail. For so long I felt lost. No student of hers had the answer — current or previous.

One day, a realization came to me. I'm a journalism student. No teacher would question my unprompted appearance in their classroom.

After minutes of meditation and absolutely zero pre-planned questions, I made my way to Mrs. Strickland's room.

Unsurprising to most, Strickland is a powerful individual. She knows what she wants. Surprising to me, however, is that she also knows exactly what I want. With only a vague explanation of the prompt and a mild amount of stuttering on my part, Strickland had a vision far beyond anything I could create.

"Get a milkshake — cookies and cream. Get nuggets. Eat Chick-Fil-A. Get in a group to study. Sleep. Once the nug is within you, that's all you need."

Now, personally, I find myself to be a bit of a chicken connoisseur. In my naivety, I asked her what kind of nuggets would be most beneficial — grilled or fried. I

quickly found out that I was not ready for the answer.

"Any style."

The simplicity in her words illicit a kind of power I haven't seen in all my life. As satirical as it sounds, this is genuinely some of the best advice I've ever been given.

Although I could never live up to the prowess of the infamous Mrs. Strickland, I made a couple discoveries during my time with her.

Mrs. Strickland is very proactive. In just my asking for her approval for the story, she gave me everything I needed. You, too, should be proactive. Not only should you buy Chick-Fil-A for yourself, but you should buy some for Mrs. Strickland. I would never condone bribery, but then again, I don't know Strickland.

Mrs. Strickland has a good memory. When I left her room, she asked me where one of her students went so she could get her back to make up a test. Personally, from the time I had walked in the room to the time I was ready to leave, I had entirely forgotten there was another student there when I arrived. Remind her to assign homework. I'm sure the class will appreciate it.

Finally, Mrs. Strickland loves good food. I'd never try to stir the pot, but I've noticed she's very Chick-Fil-A focused. Recently, I've found myself with a new opinion on the local chicken restaurants of Sarasota. If you have the courage, get Slim Chickens instead. Encourage Strickland to try it. If she loves Chick-Fil-A, she will fall head over heels for Slim Chickens. Maybe she'll even give you a chick-fil-'A'.

I hope this has enlightened your view of chemistry with Strickland. For as little as \$9.84 and a little time with friends, you can easily pass her class.



PHOTO BY MACKENZIE HAAS

A Letter for the Class of 2024: Unfulfilled Dreams

by Kai Sprunger
Asst. Editors-in-Chief

Ever since I was a freshman, I romanticized Senior Year, envisioning the exquisite outfits I would wear for all the Senior Fridays and looking forward to screaming on the Iron Gwazi with my friends at Busch Gardens.

Year after year, I would watch

the Senior Parade in awe, imagining myself in that cap and gown walking across the campus that I have known for half my life.

And now, all of this is supposed to come true. It is finally our turn, Class of 2024, to embrace Senior Year. Only 12 days from now, it will be our year – the year we have been working so hard towards these past four years of high school – to graduate and leave this place behind.

We are finally ready to bring our pens to the paper to write out the finale of this 13-year-long chapter and yet, I can't help but leaf past the previous pages, mulling over my past aspirations for senior year and my future, wondering if what I have achieved is enough.

Our younger selves had so many dreams for this moment, perhaps we anticipated receiving straight As, receiving 5s on every AP exam,

receiving 99th percentile standardized test scores, or receiving an acceptance to our dream university. Regardless of whatever it was, with college decisions and graduation on the horizon, it is inevitable that not every dream will come true. We either already have or will eventually come to the realization that we will never get the chance to live up to these expectations.

Everyone has told us everything would come together in this moment and that we would feel so fulfilled, however, this feels so far from the actual truth. With so many expectations of Senior Year cut short, it is absolutely fine to feel unsatisfied or unfulfilled with where you are at this moment.

Imperfect college applications. Poor grades. Early-onset senioritis. Unexcused absences accumulating. Rejections from colleges. Uncertain of the future.

Seniors, take a breath, you are enough.

Unfulfilled hopes and dreams are just that – unfulfilled. These expectations will never happen and we need to start treating them this way rather than attempting to change the past to make them come true. Instead of looking behind us and pondering what could have been, we should be looking forward and pondering what could be. You are not defined by what you have achieved these past 18 years, rather, you are defined by what you do with what you have learned these past 18 years.

It may seem like Senior Year has almost come to an end, but much can change or occur within a few months. Make the most out of the remaining months of your senior year, whether it is by spending time with your friends and family, intrinsically motivating yourself to achieve well in ac-

ademics, or completing unfinished projects. Let's conclude this school year on a happy note.

And for the future? In less than a year, you are going to be once again a freshman, romanticizing your future after graduating from university, either achieving higher education or finding a fulfilling job. You have your whole life ahead of you – take it in your hands and use this opportunity to create the future you want. Both your high school and university freshman versions of yourself will thank you.

Although our senior year and other high school years may not be what we expected, we should focus on the present and future rather than the past. With the rest of this chapter and many more chapters of this book to fill, we can write with the purpose of fulfilling the dreams our younger selves never got to complete.

Standing out in a sea of college applications

Trying to stay afloat amidst the competition

by Jiayi Zhu
Match Editor-in-Chief

Six years ago, my sister was told every college-aiming senior's worst fear: "You're a generic Asian applicant." These words traveled from the college guidance counselor and reached my sister's ears with a fierce weight. By the summer of senior year, it was too late to make changes. The counselor offered no further guidance or advice. The fear of not standing out amongst thousands of college applicants is universal, especially in Pine View's competitive sphere.

Of the students in Pine View's Class of 2023, three-attended state schools. USF, FSU, and UF are some that immediately come to mind. According to usnews.com, USF has an acceptance rate of 44%, FSU has an acceptance rate of 25%, and UF holds an acceptance rate of 23%. Ivy League schools, of course, are significantly lower and range from 3 – 7%. On top of that, college acceptance rates observe a decreasing trend due to a surge in college applications.

For seniors, who are in the midst of applying for college, managing AP classes, and attending time-consuming extracurriculars, these numbers

can seem daunting. Even as a junior, I feel the pressure of not only keeping up with my high achieving peers but also the fear that nothing I do will be enough

amongst them. In a sea of college applications, it can be a struggle to stay afloat, let alone stand out.

Ironically, my "generic" sister was far from a bad pick for colleges. She was high-achieving, involved in her community, and a National Merit Finalist. So, when will it be enough? What defines generic?

Pine View's competitive environment intensifies the stress circulating college application season. How many times have you felt jealous of a fellow classmate, or even friend, when comparing test scores? While Pine View provides an environment in which you are surrounded with students of similar intellectual interests and goals as you, that comes with almost an inevitable sense of competition amongst peers.

Kevin Kapadia, current

PhD student the University of South - ern California, University of Florida

and alum - nus of the Class of 2018, observed such a competitive nature between students during college application season. When so many of your peers have similar GPAs and test scores as you

on paper, it can be difficult to accurately portray yourself as not only a student, but also a person.

"Applying for state schools especially, I think everyone from Pine View tries to stand out. The margin of error is so competitive between Pine View students — your GPA might be .1 lower and all of a sudden you drop 70 spots in the class," Kapadia said.

Though class rank is no longer relevant, the margin of error still

holds true. What's important to note, though, is there is no x, y, and z to depicting yourself as an "extraordinary" student. College is what you make of it and the opportunities that will cross your path, regardless of the prestige of your school.

Both Kapadia and my sister faced the stress of the application process, but have successfully found their passions as adults. Undergoing the seemingly endless process of college applications, it may seem like you should have your whole life figured out, but no matter how obvious it may seem, we often forget this: you still have your whole life ahead of you to do so.

Chances are, the regimented life plan you have (or don't have) in your head is bound to change. At eighteen, we

shouldn't be expected to know everything — navigating ear-

ly adulthood will come with rapid changes in priority and self-understanding. In fact, as many as 50 – 75% of undergraduate students change their college major at least once before earning a degree.

"I would say no matter where you go to college, you will find something you like or dislike about it, whether it was your dream school or not," Kapadia said. "Be adaptable. Even if you really want to do something — you don't have to change your end goal — but you'll probably have to change the path you used to get there, and that's okay... Everyone has their own pathway... that's something you don't really realize until you get to college."

Truthfully, it's impossible to accurately portray and prove yourself in a single application to admission officers taking an average of less than 15 minutes to read it.

If someone (including yourself) labels you as "generic," don't let it freak you out. Instead, focus more on yourself rather than competition against others. Stick to your own values and passions. And if you haven't figured that out yet, that's okay, too. You have time.

Pine View’s Unique Competitive Environment

Can competition be beneficial?

by Allie Chung
Opinion Editor

Pine View, a place notorious for its heavy workload and difficult classes, has developed a competitive environment that is unlike any other surrounding school. Naturally, putting 1,810 gifted learners on one campus is likely to foster competition, however, is academic rivalry actually unhealthy?

Psychologists from Mind Sage say that competition becomes unhealthy for students when their primary goal is to remain at the top of the class. However, a healthy school environment should encourage students to be competitive, as sometimes peers are the biggest motivators. Whether a student has goals of a 4.0 GPA

or getting 5’s on all of their AP exams, competition will not always succeed in helping them reach those goals. However failure is natural and it is important for students to be able to manage their emotions, especially in a sheltered school setting.

Personally, being surrounded by people who are constantly trying to take the hardest classes and receive the highest grades has motivated me to do the same. I used to believe that waiting one more year to take a difficult class would magically make the course much easier. However, because other Pine View students did not have this same belief, I was able to move past this idea.

Pine View’s competitive environment has taught me to

not let fear of failure get in the way of doing what I want, and without it, I definitely would not have chosen to take some of my courses this year.

While trying to receive the best test grade possible or trying to take the hardest classes may help students get into their ideal college, the study habits and confidence gained along the way last for a lifetime and become the biggest reward.

Ultimately, the competitive environment at Pine View makes it unique from other schools and it may be more fit for some than others. However, if your goal is to become the best version of yourself, then a little competition may push you academically and help you

reach those goals.

The Balancing Act: Rethinking the Rush

by Nathan DeSouza
Director of Digital Media

Within the first few weeks of school, a recurring phrase seemed to have popped up in many student conversations. It’s not typical Pine View phrases like “I didn’t study,” or “That test was so hard”. The phrase at hand goes along the lines of “I took too many APs this year.”

And to the surprise of many, those phrases were mostly uttered by freshmen.

Among those who are overloading themselves with APs, a common motif that is displayed is that they are all under the misreading that colleges only look at APs. One of the common misconceptions among Pine View students is that college’s decisions revolve around your academics, including APs.

This misconception is rooted in the seminars held with our English classes in eighth grade. In said discussions, counselors do an outstanding job of introducing the eighth graders to high school life and the world of AP.

However, that’s the problem.

There is so much emphasis on APs and meeting goals for high school credit that upcoming freshmen repeatedly miss the big picture. Instead, they be-

come hyper-fixated on what is only a piece of the end objective.

High school is a blend of experiences that go beyond just academics. While taking APs is a great way to challenge yourself and gain a deeper understanding of your academics, it is still equally important to develop other skills for self-growth.

Taking AP courses solely will not help you stand out in the grand scheme of things. Think about it, do you really think that just taking AP courses is the only way college admissions can assess your true potential? As stated before, those four years you have in high school are filled with so much more than academics, and exploring other areas of high school life will ultimately make you stand out more.

Activities such as extra-curriculars, volunteer work, and passion projects help everyone propel into the spotlight of colleges and universities. However, how is one supposed to complete all of this without burning out if overloaded with schoolwork? The short answer is, it’s nearly impossible to. Juggling academics and out-of-school activities demonstrates your ability to manage time and maintain a balanced lifestyle. On top of that, colleges want

their students to perform well both academically and socially, and participating in those out-of-school activities is the best way to show that you are capable of that.

Grace McFarlane, once a freshman at Western Washington University, writes about her experiences concerning academics and college admission in high school.

“...when students go to choose their college, they usually hold the academic standards of the school as the highest deciding factor.”

McFarlane then goes on to say, “The environment of a school can determine things like a student’s motivational levels, experience to diversity, and social skills, where the opportunities offered will help students learn new skills and gain insights to some of their career goals. Although most students forget about these factors, colleges don’t.”

Not rushing through your high school life by taking so many APs also opens the door for you to have more holistic growth. Showing that balanced academic development is also highly favorable by admissions.

Overloading yourself on AP courses can affect your

well-being in so many ways. Trying to manage your arduous schoolwork can take a toll on your mental health, sleep, physical performance, and many other ways you would never have imagined. Ultimately, burdening yourself with any vast amount of schoolwork, in general, will affect your social involvement and personal growth.

Instead of overworking yourself, choose a more committed route in your high school life. Among other things, colleges and universities favor consistency in your courses. Admissions favor students who demonstrate commitment over a long period of time, showing experience, skill, and credibility in that area. By having this balanced and consistent course plan, you can also receive a more comprehensive and holistic understanding of your education.

Get yourself out of the mindset that more APs help you achieve your dream college. There are so many other factors that weigh in when applying to colleges. There might be more consequences than benefits waiting for you if you continue to bombard yourself with rigorous courses.

the Torch

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Managing Editor: Terry Shen
Match Editor-in-Chief: Jiayi Zhu

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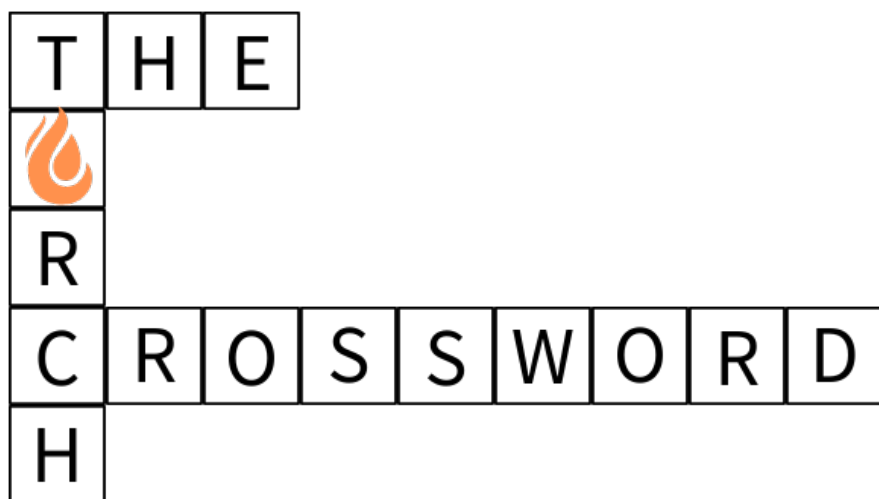
The Torch covers topics, issues, events and opinions of relevance to students grades nine through twelve. The Torch is published four times a year by Pine View School and maintains membership in the Flori-

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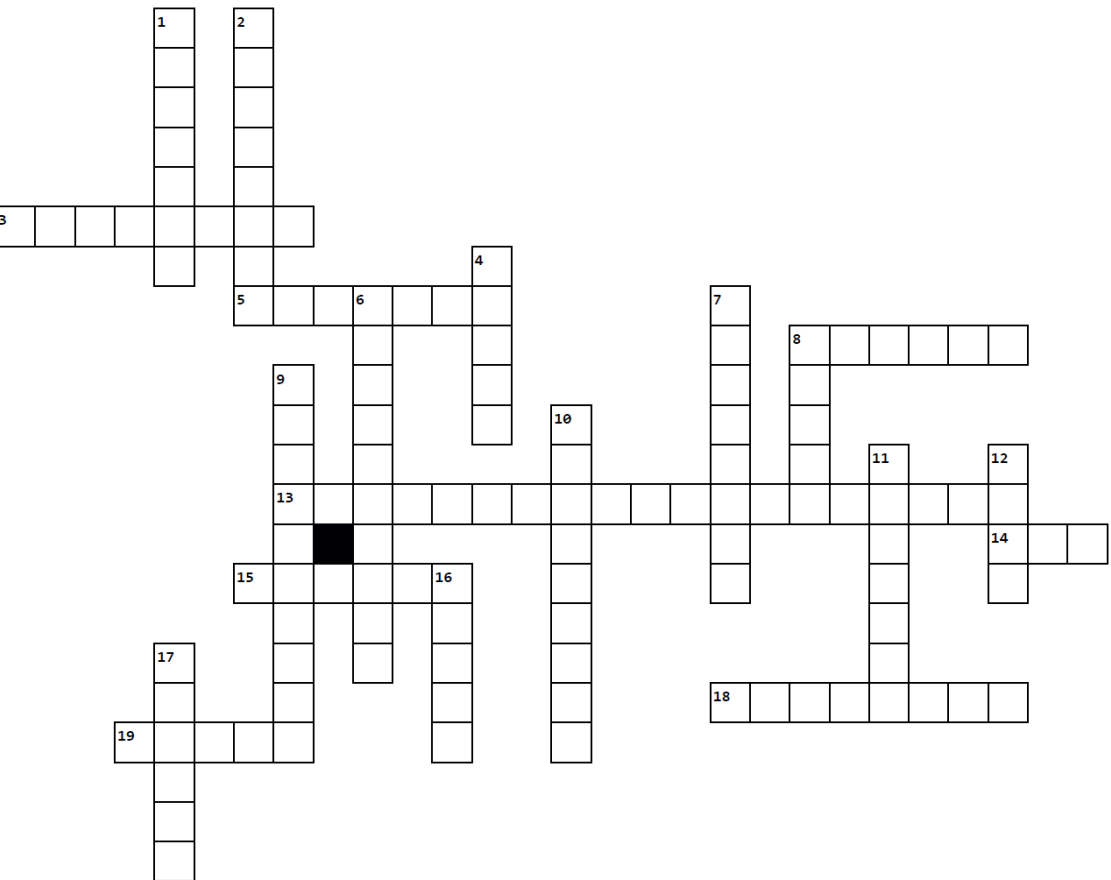
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Hints correspond to information shared in the stories throughout this issue, including through QR codes. The first person to bring their completed version to Room 117 in Building 17 will win a \$10 gift card. Good luck!



- across
- down
3. Who plays saxaphone for the Scramblers?

5. Who is the main character of the movie A Christmas Story

8. What does Rayna Parker build at The Factory?

13. Which University did Kevin Kapadia attend for undergrad?

14. Who upcycles clothes on the Torch staff?

15. Who is Emily Fung's teammate on the Riverview Golf Team?

18. Who is the president of Girls Who Code Club?

19. Who won the Total Drama Island: Camp Pine Viewawaka?
1. Which member of HR did The Torch interview on the Hiring Freeze?

2. Who wrote the throwback story, "Population Growth Means New School"?

4. Who changed the dimensions of The Match to make it more accomadating for elementary students?

6. Which reliable news source that Schwieg recommends?

7. Which loved staff member recently left Pine View to work at Taylor Ranch Elementary?

8. Who is the Freshmen Class President?

9. What does the money fund in the Speech and Debate themed Humor Story?

10. What style of crochet does Winter Gray-enjoys making?

11. Who is the Assistant Editor of Entertainment?

12. What is the genre of music on the AP Lang Spotify playlist?

16. How many AP World classes are offered this year?

17. Who lost Torch Tries: Mini-golf?

Isabella's Insights

The trials of being a student journalist

by Isabella Kulawik
Editor-in-chief

When I first applied to be on the Torch, I had no idea what to expect. Like many who are not a part of the journalism program, there were a lot of things I didn't know about. From interviewing people to writing stories to laying out pages, there was certainly a learning curve in my first year. Most importantly, I didn't realize how difficult it was to stay late after school, keep up with homework and Torch work, and most of all, navigate Florida's current political climate while still maintaining the principles of journalism.

As students, all our work is voluntary and a learning experience. Often I find myself with unanswered emails and newspapers that end up in the recycling bin by fellow classmates. To be sincere, although it may not seem like it, it hurts. these papers are the accumulation of a month of writing, designing, and editing, all with approval by administration.

Don't get me wrong, joining Torch was the best decision I have made in my high school career — it has taught me so much about resilience and communication. It is also amazing to watch



PHOTO BY ASHLEY PALMER

as students come together to make a publication. However, that does not come without its trials and tribulations, I recall late nights spent repeating an audio recording over and over to decipher one word, or corresponding back and forth with a local political figure just to have an interview cancelled at the last minute.

With that being said, I look forward to the new set of students who will embark on their journalism experience, And, I hope that they will be able to navigate the world of student journalism as we do.

So, as the Torch continues to publish as it has for the last 35 years, remember the students behind the paper who are doing this for their passion.

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to our sponsors...
Our publication would not have been possible without the gracious support of our sponsors. We sincerely thank you for your contributions.

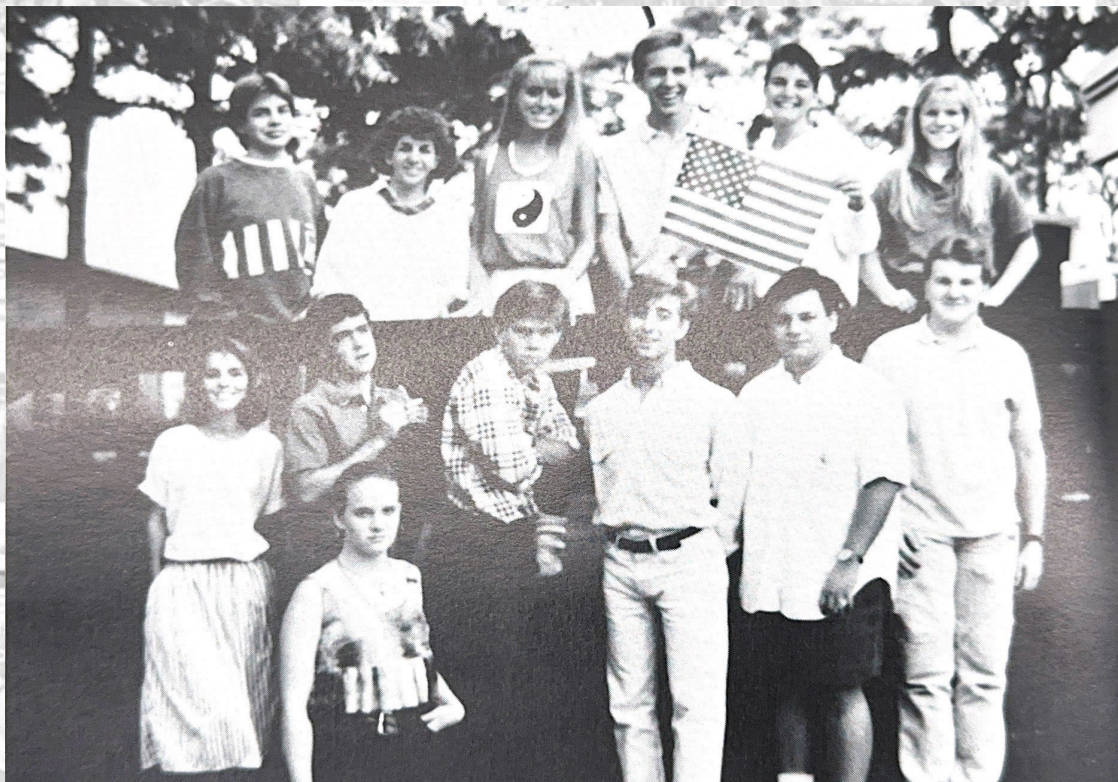
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The Torch

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DECEMBER 18TH, 2023

CELEBRATING OUR 35TH ANNIVERSARY



The Torch staff is posing for the yearbook with an American Flag on Pine View's original campus. These were the first members for the Torch which was founded in 1988 by former advisor Bernice Brenner.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY SANYA PATEL

Read All About It!

The past thirty five years have been filled with memories to cherish for all Torch members. The Torch staff has been working hard to create a publictaion for all Pine View students to enjoy. In celebrating this milestone, The Torch wanted to take a trip back in time to see what was happening on campus thirty five years ago. Interviews with former Torch staff members included to talk about their time on staff and how it affected their future. Stories from the original Torch show how some of our opinions have been carried forward through the generations.

The Torch originally started out as a newsletter which later transpired into a full-blown publication with the help of former advisor Bernice Brenner, former Principal Steve Largo, and lead by Pine View alum and first editor of The Torch, Aaron Stutz. Stutz advocated for The Torch to be offered as an elective to allow students to express themselves through journalism. Through the years, The Torch has since gained a elementary newspaper, a middle school magazine, a website and many social media pages.



The current Torch staff is posing in the quad with the Broadcast students. The Torch has been prospering for thirty five years.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY SANYA PATEL

This is one of the several different headings The Torch has used since it first began!

The Campus Upgrade

Taking a look back in time at the plans for out current campus
by Lindsay Luberecki
News Editor

Population Growth Means New School

by Robert Flegler

Sarasota County Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Charles Fowler, recently held a press conference. He detailed his plans for the future of the school system. Among the topics of discussion was the future of Pine View.

There will be a new facility for Pine View. This facility will be constructed and ready for students by 1992 or 1993. The new building will be built on an as yet undetermined site.

Dr. Fowler says there are two areas under consideration for the new site. The most widely known possibility is near Clark Road and I-75. Another possible site is in the Osprey area. The current Pine View facility will become part of Alta Vista Elementary School.

No plan for the new building has been finalized. Pine View Principal, Mr. Steven Largo, heads a committee that will make suggestions as to what needs to be included in the facility. They will issue a report called Educational Specifications.

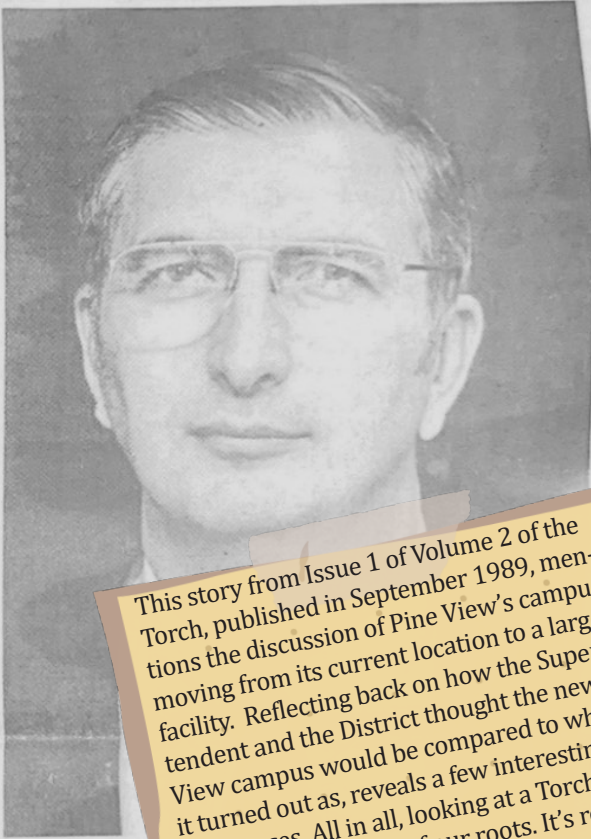
Dr. Fowler states that at this point a few things have been decided about the new Pine View. The new facility will be built with enough space to allow for 1200 students. This means the new building will be able to withstand a 50% increase in the student body.

Dr. Fowler says that there is no discussion of reducing the number of grade levels currently studying at Pine View. He says while its only rumor at this time, there is a chance that Pine View may be expanded even further. Dr. Fowler says Pine View may be expanded to the kindergarten level.

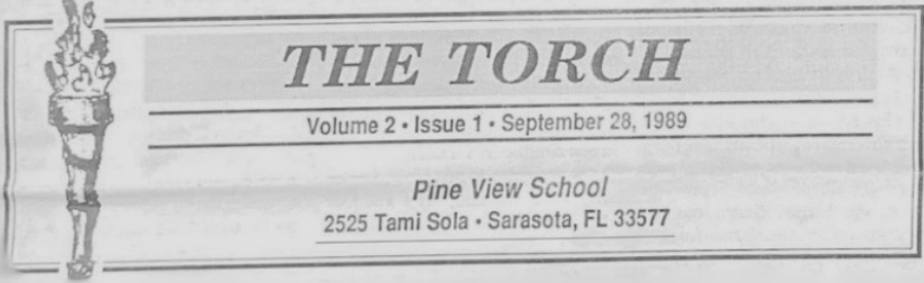
Dr. Fowler's plans call for the constructing of several new schools. This will require a large budget. Does this bring up the possibility that the building of a new Pine View facility could be pushed back? Dr. Fowler says no, that a new Pine View will be part of the budget he presents to the school board.

The budget for the new Pine View has been increased from 11 million to 14 million in the past year. Dr. Fowler says that this is the budget for a normal middle school.

The light at the end of the tunnel is shining for a permanent Pine View facility. It appears that Pine View will be the recipient of a regular school facility.



This story from Issue 1 of Volume 2 of the Torch, published in September 1989, mentions the discussion of Pine View's campus moving from its current location to a larger facility. Reflecting back on how the Superintendent and the District thought the new Pine View campus would be compared to what it turned out as, reveals a few interesting differences. All in all, looking at a Torch of the past shows us some of our roots. It's reminiscent of the Torch covering the construction of Building 17 a few years ago – an expansion of the expansion that at the time of this old story, was just a part of the future.



Her Future Beyond the Torch



From left to right: Sarah Hassan, Grace Johnson, and Joanna Malvas posing on Senior Friday in their caps and gowns. All three girls were on the Torch Staff their senior year. PHOTO PROVIDED BY JOANNA MALVAS

by Sanya Patel
Assistant Editor-in-Chief

Almost every staff member has an interesting story as to how they got involved with the Journalism program here at Pine View. Whether it was on a whim, or that you just like writing the Torch has been harboring all sorts of creative minds that came from all sorts of different places and welcomes them with open arms. This was no different for Joanna Malvas, a Class of 2022 alum who was the assistant editor of The Torch during her senior year. She first became introduced to it in middle school by Chris Lenerz, our current advisor who was also a seventh grade Spanish teacher at the time.

"Mr. Lenerz had signed my yearbook, and he was like, 'Hey, I think you should apply for the Torch!'"

Malvas still had one more year until

highschool, so she began getting involved in a middle school club that published a magazine every few months, which later turned into the Spark, our middle school publication.

Although she started to drift away from the club as high school was soon approaching, Malvas kept the Torch on her mind in hopes to join, with much encouragement from Lenerz as well. Receiving the news at the end of eighth grade that she had made it in, Malvas was excited for the opportunity.

As much of a learning curve as freshman year is, joining the Torch is no different, but Malvas continued to power through and really enjoyed her time writing for the paper.

"When I joined Torch, obviously it is this whole whirlwind of learning skills. It's not just writing, it's leadership, its editing, it's graphics, learning how to talk and interview people, but also get along with people on staff as well. So, I think Torch really grew my character and skills in that way."

Fast forward four years and Malvas was in her senior year, still not sure what to major in applying to colleges. When it came down to it, she knew that she joined the Torch because she loved writing and wanted to continue to do so in the future.

"By the time it was my senior year, I still didn't have a huge idea of what I wanted to do" Malvas said, "All I really

knew is that, I am a really good writer and I have really good communication skills because of speech and debate, so I think I am going to apply as a journalism major for a lot of the schools that I wanted to go to."

When it comes to preparing you for real work in the Journalism field, Malvas attributes much of her success to her time on the Torch. She said that with the many new skills you begin to learn early on during the program, it mimics what you would see in the real world.

"Torch prepared me in so many different ways, like when you get to college, you'd be surprised how many people do not know how to write a basic lead, make a graphic, or how many people don't know how to use [Adobe] InDesign. Torch was like bootcamp for four years on all of those sorts of things that people are learning right now," she said.

Aside from actual tangible skills, Malvas was able to make countless friendships along the way that only strengthened while being on Torch. Malvas talked about how drama and

arguments on staff were dealt with because of the "work" relationship.

"It's no longer superficial, and you start to respect people you work with for their skills and what they have to offer...You can go from those arguments and you realize that, 'I really value you as a friend, but we both have the best interest of the Torch in mind at the end of the day.' So regardless of how many disagreements, how much drama there might be, we all 'kick it' for the Torch."

Malvas said she is 'forever indebted to the Torch' for all that it has taught her and the skills she has picked up along the way.

"I was not expecting to do any of what I am doing now," she said through laughter, "but as of now, I'm a journalism major and a Film and TV minor, so it's a lot of fun."



Joanna Malvas and her co-correspondant posing in front of a "Good Morning BU" sign. Malvas used many of the skills she learned from The Torch to get where she is now. PHOTO PROVIDED BY JOANNA MALVAS



Makes Some Changes

by Terry Shen
Managing Editor

Nicole Bencie, an alumna of the journalism program, graduated from Pine View in 2015. She is currently a medical student at Brown University applying for residency. Bencie joined the Torch in her freshman year of high school.

Bencie said that she joined the journalism program because she enjoys writing. "I like listening to peoples' stories. I like interviewing people and I think when you are in medicine that's essentially what you're doing. You're listening to peoples' stories one after the other and trying to wait and trying to find ways to improve on whatever situation they're going through."

Bencie served as the Match (elementary school newspaper) Editor-in-Chief in her junior year and served as the Torch (high school newspaper) Editor-in-Chief in her senior year. She left her mark on the publications – especially the Match.

"I was really getting this feeling that people weren't reading the [Match] to be totally honest with you ... It was a very similar carbon copy to the torch."

From the size of the paper to the content of the stories, she decided to change some things.

Bencie saw aspects of the Match that could be implemented. "They're opening this giant paper that's the size of their own backpacks...It was a total revamp. I spent my entire summer. I remember going page by page and basically creating a mock ... draft of what the paper would look like."

The Match switched from the size of the Torch to a tabloid style. Bencie said that although the tabloid style created more space constraints, it allowed the Match staff to be more intentional about what they were publishing.

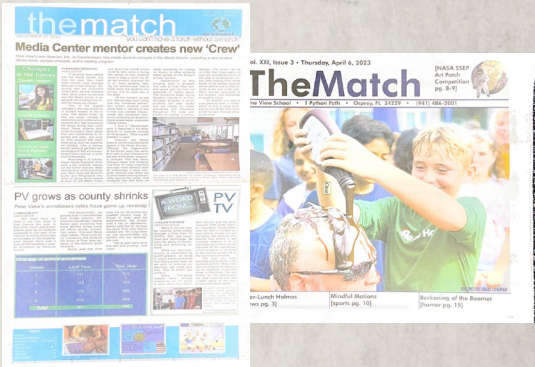
"I just basically pivoted to be more accessible for the kids."

Content and story topics shifted. The Students' Section, where elementary students submitted their own papers and artwork, was added. A game section with interactive activities was also implemented. The newspaper began to focus more on community-oriented news by showcasing the elementary students' work and projects. Bencie described the inclusion of more stories that were applicable to elementary school students – rather than reusing stories from the Torch.

"If students feel appreciated, they're going to be more likely to pick up the paper and more likely to read it and get more excited."



Nicole Bencie and The Match staff are posing for a group picture with their matching shirts. Bencie's change to The Match has increased readership among elementary students. PHOTO PROVIDED BY NICOLE BENCIE



The student parking lot at Pine View has always been a major topic of conversation. A constant back and forth of will-they-wont-they in regards to paving it has kept the shell lot a timeless conversation piece. As much as we like to complain about it, it is a beautiful piece of history that we get to share with students that attended Pine View decades before us. There are many unique aspects to Pine View that

make it all the more bittersweet when one must part ways with all its quirks and face the real world. We may not be the most school spirited, but if there is one thing that years upon years of students can agree on, it's that we should pave the shell lot! This article is from the Torch Volume XI Issue 3, 1998 featuring student's opinions on the parking lot after freshly moving to the new campus.

Students Voice Opinions Regarding Student Parking Lot

By Chris Rohde

Since we first arrived at the new campus, the student parking lot has been plagued by potholes, dust clouds, and dirty cars. For the first year on campus, the senior class parked in the paved lot behind the elementary buildings.

Now all students must park in the shell lot on the far side of campus. Massive potholes and washed out shells have caused countless car washes and realign-

ments for student drivers.

The Class of 1999 was interested in paving the student parking lot as their gift to the campus. They were turned away by Mr. Largo, however, because of price reasons. According to Mr. Largo, the cost for pavement would be approximately \$50,000.

Originally the parking lot didn't belong to Pine View and was planned to be the site of a county building.

After that county plan was scrapped, Pine View annexed the site, shelled it, and turned it into the student parking lot.

Evidently this shell lot is not good enough for the student drivers. The administration has been talking about plans to re-shell the parking lot and fill the potholes during Winter vacation.

One idea was to pave the parking lot in phases, working from the front back, so it will be done within a few years. A

cavalcade of popular student opinion has called for its paving.

Here students and faculty voice their opinions on the parking lot:

"I think all students would like to see the parking lot paved. If cost is a factor, maybe an alternate surface could be used. The sand and shells cause all the cars to have a constant layer of dust which makes everyone's car need a constant car wash."

-James Pemrick, grade 11

"Sure, it would be nice if the parking lot was paved, but I don't think the school, or the school board for that matter, care enough about their students to spend money on paving this beast."

-David Peter, grade 12

"The holes in the parking lot, along with the white dust kicked up over the cars are both detrimental to students' automobiles. I find it interesting that the teachers and faculty are allowed to park in a paved parking lot, yet students, the majority of the group here, are forced to park in the shell, with the potholes, with the dust. Weird..."

-Lauren Gay, grade 12

"As a faculty member, the state of the student parking lot really doesn't concern me all that much. But if I were a student, I could definitely see that I would want to pave it. I mean, the dust and pebbles it kicks up can't be good on peoples' car. It's too bad that the price on it is such a restriction."

-Coach Donovan, Teacher

"We would gladly pave the student parking lot tomorrow if the funds were available. Unfortunately, the school has other pressing needs which cannot be ignored. Not the least of which is keeping up with technology."

-Dr. George Kenney, Vice-Principal

"Although it appears that the paving of the parking lot is an important concern for a portion of our students, as a school we always placed a priority on what takes place within the classrooms at all grade levels."

-Mr. Steve Largo, Principal



The shells lay dormant as they wait for yet another student to "peel out" and spray them everywhere. (Photo by Drews)



We would like to take this space to thank all of those who were ever involved in the making of the Torch. From the the staff, to the advisors, to the people in administration, and especially the readers, we can't thank you enough. Celebrating 35 years of hardwork and dedication from generations of students at our school means the world and more. When looking back to these giants, whose shoulders we stand upon, it is heartwarming to see how much effort they put into this newspaper; and how we continue to carry that tradition of excellence today. Thank you to the generations of staff that came before us!

